Nobody recognizes I am Vietnamese because when they look at me they think I am Chinese. They cannot recognize who I am.

My Lien Nguyen, 1996
Denise Williams had become increasingly aware of the racial tension in the high school in which she teaches, but she did not expect the hostility that erupted between some black and white students that Friday. In the week that followed, the faculty decided they had to do more to develop positive interethnic and interracial relations among students. They established a committee to identify consultants and other resources to guide them in this effort.

Ms. Williams, however, thought that neither she nor her students could wait for months to receive a report and recommendations from the committee. She was ready to introduce the civil rights movement in her social studies class. It seemed a perfect time to promote better cross-cultural communications. She decided that she would let students talk about their feelings.

She soon learned that this topic was not an easy one to handle. African American students expressed their anger at the discriminatory practices in the school and the community. Most white students did not believe that there was any discrimination. They believed there were no valid reasons for the anger of the African American and Latino students and that if they just followed the rules and worked harder, they would not have their perceived problems. She thought the class was getting nowhere. In fact, sometimes the anger on both sides was so intense that she worried a physical fight would erupt. She was frustrated that the
class discussions and activities were not helping students understand their stereotypes and prejudices. At times, she thought students were just becoming more polarized in their beliefs. She wondered whether she could do anything in her class to improve understanding, empathy, and communications across groups.

1. What factors contribute to racial and ethnic conflict in some schools?
2. What racial groups are most likely to see themselves in the school curriculum?
3. How can a classroom reflect the diversity of its students so that they all feel valued and respected?
4. What were the positive and negative outcomes of the steps taken by Ms. Williams?
5. What would you have done to improve cross-cultural relations among class members?

To answer these questions online, go to this chapter’s Opportunities for Reflection module of the Companion Website.

Ethnic and Racial Diversity

The United States is an ethnically and racially diverse nation comprised of nearly 300 ethnic groups whose members can identify the national origins of their ancestors. First Americans make up less than 1% of the total U.S. population today with 170 Indian tribes that are indigenous or native to the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Individuals who were born in Africa, Asia, Australia, Canada, Central America, Europe, Mexico, and South America comprise 11.5% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Family members and ancestors of the remaining 87.5% of the population also immigrated to the United States from around the world over the past 500 years.

Many people forget that the United States was populated when explorers from other nations arrived on its shores. As more and more Europeans arrived, Native Americans were not treated as equal citizens in the formation of the new nation. Eventually, most first Americans were forcibly segregated from the dominant group and, in many cases, forced to move from their geographic homelands to reservations in other parts of the country. This separation led to a pattern of isolation and inequities that remains today. The atrocities and near genocide that resulted from the treatment of Native Americans have been ignored in most historical accounts of U.S. history. Not until 2000 did an official of the U.S. government apologize for the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ “legacy of racism [that is, the belief that one race is superior to others] and inhumanity that included massacres, forced relocations of tribes and attempts to wipe out Indian languages and cultures” (Kelley, 2000, p. 1).

Today, 1.9 million citizens identify themselves as Native American only; more than half a million people identify themselves as Alaska Native only. Another 1.5 million indicate they are partially Native American or Alaska Native.
Forty percent of the Native American population belongs to one of six tribes: Cherokee, Navajo, Latin Native American, Choctaw, Sioux, and Chippewa (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). What do you know about Native Americans? Where did you learn about them? How accurate is your knowledge base?

**EXPLORE DIVERSITY:** Go to the *Exploring Diversity* CD located in the accompanying booklet for the perspective of one Native American and view the clip: *Majority Culture.*

Although most of the first European settlers were English, the French, Dutch, and Spanish also established early settlements. After the consolidation and development of the United States as an independent nation, successive waves of Western Europeans joined the earlier settlers. Irish, Swedish, and German immigrants came to escape economic impoverishment or political repression in their countries of origin. These early European settlers brought with them the political institutions that would become the framework for our government. The melding of these Northern and Western European cultures over time became the dominant culture to which other immigrant groups strived or were forced to assimilate.

Africans were also among the early explorers of the Americas and later part of the foreign settlers in the early days of colonization. By the eighteenth century, Africans were being kidnapped and sold into bondage by slave traders. As involuntary immigrants, this group of Africans underwent a process quite different from the Europeans who voluntarily emigrated. Separated from their families and homelands, robbed of their freedom and cultures, Africans developed a new culture out of their different African, European, and Native American heritages and their unique experiences in this country. Initially, the majority of African Americans lived in the South where today they remain the majority population in many counties. In the middle of the twentieth century, industrial jobs in Northern, Eastern, and Western cities began to open up for the first time to African Americans, leading to migration from the South. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the trend had reversed with a growing number of African Americans from northern states now moving south.

Another factor that contributed to the migration to the North was the racism and political terror that existed in much of the South at that time. Even today, a racial ideology is implicit in the policies and practices of institutions. It continues to block significant assimilation of many African Americans into the dominant society. Although the civil rights movement of the 1960s reduced the barriers that prevented many African Americans from enjoying the advantages of the middle class, the number of African Americans, especially children, who remain in poverty is disproportionately high.

Mexican Americans also occupy a unique role in the formation of the United States. Spain was the first European country to colonize Mexico and the Western and Southwestern United States. In 1848, the U.S. government annexed the northern sections of the Mexican Territory, including the current areas of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and southern California. The Mexican and Native Americans living within that territory became an oppressed minority in the area in which they had previously been the dominant population. The labor of Mexicans
has been persistently sought by farmers and businesses over the past century. Once they arrived, they were treated with hostility, limiting them to low-paying jobs and a subordinate status. Dominant supremacy theories based on color and language have been used against them in a way that, even today, prevents many Mexican Americans from assimilating fully into the dominant culture.

The industrial opening of the West signaled the need for labor that could be met through immigration from Asia. Chinese worked the plantations in Hawaii. Chinese, Japanese, and Phillipinos (Filipinos) were recruited to provide the labor needed on the West Coast for mining gold and building railroads.

By the end of the nineteenth century industries in the nation’s cities required more labor than was available. Immigrants from the relatively more impoverished Eastern and Southern European countries were enticed to accept jobs primarily in Midwestern and Eastern cities. Into the early twentieth century, many immigrants arrived from nations such as Poland, Hungary, Italy, Russia, and Greece. The reasons for their immigration were similar to many earlier immigrants: devastating economic and political hardship in the homeland and demand for labor in the United States. Many immigrants came to the United States with the hope of sharing the better wages and living conditions they thought existed here. But many found conditions here worse than they had expected. Most were forced to live in substandard housing near the business and manufacturing districts where they worked, in urban ghettos that grew into ethnic enclaves in which they continued to use the native language and maintain the culture of their native lands. To support their social and welfare needs, ethnic institutions often were established. Many of the dominant racist policies that had been used against African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans earlier came to be used against these immigrants as well when they first arrived.

**IMMIGRATION**

At various times, the U.S. Congress has prohibited the immigration of different national or ethnic groups on the basis of the racial superiority of the older, established immigrant groups that had colonized the nation. As early as 1729, immigration was being discouraged. In that year, Pennsylvania passed a statute that increased the head tax on foreigners in that colony. Later that century, Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, which lengthened the time required to become a citizen from 5 years to 14 years. In the nineteenth century, native-born Americans again began to worry about their majority and superiority status over entering immigrant groups. This movement, nativism, was designed to restrict immigration and to protect the interests of native-born Americans. It was an extreme form of ethnocentrism and nationalism, requiring loyalty and devotion to the United States over all other nations.

In 1881, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed to halt all immigration from China. The Dillingham Commission reported in 1917 that all immigrants should be able to pass a literacy test. The nativists received further support for their views when Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act in 1924, establishing annual immigration quotas to disproportionately favor immigrants from Western European countries. It also stopped all immigration from Japan. The Johnson-Reed Act was abolished in 1965 when a new quota system
was established, dramatically increasing the number of immigrants allowed annually from the Eastern Hemisphere and reducing the number from the Western Hemisphere.

Congressional leaders and presidential candidates during the 1980s promoted a get tough approach to immigration, calling for greater control of the U.S. borders. However, the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act ended up expanding immigration by allowing visas to persons born in countries adversely affected by the 1965 law (that is, Europeans). Congress was not the only group expressing concern about the number of foreigners entering the United States. Sixty percent of California voters in 1994 passed Proposition 187, declaring illegal immigrants as ineligible for public social services, health care services, and education. It also required state and local agencies to report suspected illegals to immigration authorities. Almost immediately after the proposition was passed, a U.S. District Court judge issued an injunction against it because it conflicted with a 1982 Supreme Court decision that required the education of illegal immigrants. The injunction also indicated that the federal government, not states, regulates immigration. It was declared unconstitutional in 1998. Challenges to immigration, especially illegal immigration, continue to be raised today with some people calling for the government to seriously limit all immigration.

Why is immigration such a controversial issue? Why are some businesses not supportive of a strict adherence to preventing illegal immigrants from entering the country?

As people from all over the world joined Native Americans in populating this nation, they brought with them cultural experiences from their native countries. The conditions they encountered, the reasons they came, and their expectations about life in this country differed greatly, causing each ethnic group to view itself as distinct from other ethnic groups. However, just because individuals have the same national origins does not mean that they have the same history and experiences as other individuals and families in that group. The time of immigration, the place in which groups settled, the reasons for emigrating, their socioeconomic status, and the degree to which they are affected by racism and discrimination interact to form a new ethnic group that differs from those who came before and will come afterward.

Changing Patterns. As shown in Figure 3.1, the change in the immigration law has allowed the influx of immigrants from nations that formerly were restricted or excluded. In 1960, the nations contributing the largest number of legal immigrants were Mexico, Germany, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Italy. By 2001, the five leading countries were Mexico, India, China, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The Asian American population grew dramatically over the past century. Asian Americans were 0.3% of the population in 1920, but had expanded to 4% in 2000. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia, and Ukraine contributed the largest number of European immigrants. The immigration rate during the past decade has been nearly 1 million per year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Immigration is worldwide, not just a U.S. phenomenon, with 3% of the world’s population living in countries in which they were not born (Smith, 2003).

Favored Status. Favoritism has been granted to refugees fleeing countries not supported by the U.S. government. Refugees are the persons recognized by the
federal government as being persecuted or legitimately bearing persecution in their home country because of race, religion, nationality, or membership in a specific social or political group. Between 1991 and 2000, more than a million immigrants were admitted as refugees; the largest number came from Vietnam, followed by Cuba, Ukraine, the Soviet Union, Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Laos. Refugees from some countries, like Haiti, are refused entry as refugees, no matter how oppressive the government may be. As a result of governmental immigration and refugee policies, the U.S. population from various national and ethnic groups has been controlled, but has become increasingly diverse.

The U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services estimates that 7 million unauthorized immigrants lived in the United States in 2000. The status of many of these immigrants later is reclassified as legal because they meet the requirements for employment-based visas, refugees, or being sponsored by a family as allowed by law. They may also become legal immigrants through amnesty programs periodically enacted by Congress. Just over two-thirds of the illegal immigrants are from Mexico; only 5% are from outside the Western Hemisphere. California is home to the largest number, with 32% of the undocumented population. The majority of undocumented immigrants settle in the same states as most legal immigrants—California, Texas, New York, Illinois, and Florida.

The border between Mexico and the United States is an ever-present reality in the Southwestern states. Fifty-four percent of the Latino population lives in California, Texas, and Arizona (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003), having an impact on politics and economics in the region. Border patrols search for illegal immigrants. Latinos from all walks of life are regularly stopped and searched by police. Power struggles are common among powerful and oppressed groups and landowners and migrant workers.
In *Plyer v. Doe*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1982 that undocumented children have the right to seek a public education. Educators are not Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) officials who enforce immigration laws. In fact, they cannot require students or parents to declare their immigration status, and they cannot make inquiries that might expose such status. For example, parents cannot be forced to provide social security numbers to school districts. Educators should take all possible action to encourage undocumented students to attend school.

**Location of Immigrant Groups.** The foreign-born population is concentrated in five states: California, New York, Florida, Texas, and Illinois with 40% of them living in the West (Briggs, 2000). More than 80% of the immigrants settle in metropolitan areas, many of them in central cities. New York City, Los Angeles/Long Beach, Chicago, Miami, the Washington, DC area, San Francisco, Orange County (CA), Oakland (CA), Houston, and the Boston area are home to 65% of today’s immigrants (Olson, 2000). Immigration to nonmetropolitan areas is often dependent on job availability and perceived quality of life. As a result, schools in Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Montana, North Dakota, and Wisconsin include students from different cultures and with languages other than English.

**Education of Immigrants.** The education level of immigrants in 2002 differed greatly. The percent of the foreign-born population with bachelor’s degrees was nearly equal to the native-born population at 17% and 18%, respectively. Nearly 10% of the foreign-born population has advanced degrees. At the other end of the economic scale, 33% of foreign-born adults do not have a high school degree—almost three times as many as the native-born population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Studies of immigrants indicate that those with the social or cultural capital of higher education and higher socioeconomic status are more likely to be accepted by dominant society and allowed to assimilate into the middle class (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

**CIVIL RIGHTS**

Members of oppressed groups sometimes coalesce to fight against the harsh economic and political realities and injustices imposed on them. Thus, movements for democratic rights and economic justice develop among different ethnic groups. These movements invariably entail a rise in the concern of the community with its original or indigenous culture, as this aspect of their lives also may have been suppressed and excluded by the dominant majority.

**The Civil Rights Movement.** The fight for civil rights by ethnic and racial groups has a long history in the United States. Native Americans fought to maintain their rights as foreigners appropriated their homelands. African slaves revolted against their owners. Free blacks decried the discrimination and violence they faced in the North. Martin Delaney led a Black Nationalist movement in the mid-1800s for black liberation. In the early twentieth
Members of different ethnic and racial groups join forces to protest for civil rights.

century Mexican American miners in Arizona led a strike for better working conditions and pay equal to that of white miners. Across the Southwest, Mexican Americans established ethnic organizations to fight exploitation and support those who were in dire straits. Chinese immigrants used the courts to overturn the 1790 Naturalization Law that excluded them for citizenship (Takaki, 1993).

Although individuals and groups continued to push the government for civil rights throughout the twentieth century, the movement exploded in the 1950s and 1960s when large numbers of African Americans in the South challenged their oppressed status in society. Students sat at lunch counters that were for whites only, challenging Jim Crow laws that forced whites and persons of color to use different public accommodations such as water fountains and restrooms to hotels and restaurants. Rosa Parks defied authorities when she sat in the whites-only section at the front of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Blacks and whites marched for freedom and established Freedom Schools across the South. Native Americans confronted governmental abuse at Wounded Knee.

The call for “Black Power” followed years of civil rights struggle that led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which banned discrimination in schools, employment, and public accommodations and secured the voting rights of African Americans. Yet, changes did not necessarily follow. Although legislation guaranteed equality for all racial groups, many European Americans continued to fight against desegregation of schools and other public facilities. Frustrations with the dominant
Ethnicity and Race

Linda Brown and her family were the plaintiffs in one of the four cases that led to the Supreme Court decision on Brown v. Board of Education in 1954.

group led members of oppressed groups to identify strongly with other members of their ethnic group to fight discrimination and inequality with a unified voice. These struggles continue today not only in this country, but throughout the world.

Brown v. Board of Education. Schools have long been at the center of civil rights movements. At one time children of color were not allowed to attend school. Later they were not allowed to attend schools with white children, leading to a system of desegregated schools in which students of color were delegated to schools without the books and resources to which most white children had access. Desegregation continued in many states until more than a decade after the Supreme Court unanimously declared that separate but equal schooling was not equal in its 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision.

The 1954 decision was the result of four cases making their way through the courts: Briggs v. Elliott in South Carolina, Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County in Virginia, Gebhart v. Belton in Delaware, and Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka in Kansas. A fifth case, Bolling v. Sharpe, settled a year later, declared that the federal government could not segregate schools in the District of Columbia. The Supreme Court returned to the implementation of Brown v. Board of Education in 1955 when it sent all school integration cases back to the lower courts and asked states to desegregate “with all deliberate speed.” Later courts called for the desegregation of metropolitan areas, busing students across city lines to ensure integration. The milestones in the desegregation and resegregation of schools are chronicled in Table 3.1.
Table 3.1 Milestones in Desegregating and Resegregating Schools

1896 The Supreme Court authorizes segregation in Plessy v. Ferguson, finding Louisiana’s “separate but equal” law constitutional.

1940 A federal court requires equal salaries for African American and white teachers. (Alston v. School Board of City of Norfolk)

1947 In a precursor to the Brown case, a federal appeals court strikes down segregated schooling for Mexican American and white students. (Westminster School Dist. v. Mendez) The verdict prompts California Governor Earl Warren to repeal a state law calling for segregation of Native American and Asian American students.

1950 Barbara Johns, a 16-year-old junior at Robert R. Moton High School in Farmville, Va., organizes and leads 450 students in an anti-school segregation strike.

1954 In a unanimous opinion, the Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education overturns Plessy and declares that separate schools are “inherently unequal.” The Court decides on how to implement the decision and asks for another round of arguments.

1955 In Brown II, the Supreme Court orders the lower federal courts to require desegregation “with all deliberate speed.”

1956 Tennessee Governor Frank Clement calls in the National Guard after white mobs attempt to block the desegregation of a high school.

1957 More than 1,000 paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division and a federalized Arkansas National Guard protect nine black students integrating Central High School in Little Rock, Ark.

1958 The Supreme Court rules that fear of social unrest or violence, whether real or constructed by those wishing to oppose integration, does not excuse state governments from complying with Brown. (Cooper v. Aaron)

1959 Prince Edward County, Va., officials close their public schools rather than integrate them.

1960 In New Orleans, federal marshals shield 6-year-old Ruby Bridges from an angry crowd as she attempts to enroll in school.

1964 The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is adopted. Title IV of the Act authorizes the federal government to file school desegregation cases. Title VI of the Act prohibits discrimination in programs and activities, including schools, receiving federal financial assistance.

1965 The Supreme Court orders states to dismantle segregated school systems “root and branch.” The Court identifies five factors—facilities, staff, faculty, extracurricular activities and transportation—to be used to gauge a school system’s compliance with the mandate of Brown. (Green v. County School Board of New Kent County)

1969 The Supreme Court declares the “all deliberate speed” standard is no longer constitutionally permissible and orders the immediate desegregation of Mississippi schools. (Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education)

Many segregated school districts and universities took years to begin to integrate their schools. The fierce resistance of many whites in many communities required the use of the National Guard to protect African American students who were entering white schools for the first time. Many whites established private schools or moved to the suburbs where the population was primarily white.
Table 3.1 Milestones in Desegregating and Resegregating Schools—Continued

1971 The Court approves busing, magnet schools, compensatory education and other tools as appropriate remedies to overcome the role of residential segregation in perpetuating racially segregated schools. (Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education)

1972 The Supreme Court refuses to allow public school systems to avoid desegregation by creating new, mostly or all-white “splinter districts.” (Wright v. Council of the City of Emporia; United States v. Scotland Neck City Board of Education)

1973 The Supreme Court rules that states cannot provide textbooks to racially segregated private schools to avoid integration mandates. (Norwood v. Harrison)

The Supreme Court finds that the Denver school board intentionally segregated Mexican American and black students from white students. (Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1)

The Supreme Court rules that education is not a “fundamental right” and that the Constitution does not require equal education expenditures within a state. (San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez)

1974 The Supreme Court blocks metropolitan-wide desegregation plans as a means to desegregate urban schools with high minority populations. (Milliken v. Bradley)

The Supreme Court rules that the failure to provide instruction to those with limited English proficiency violates Title VI’s prohibition of national origin, race or color discrimination in school districts receiving federal funds. (Lau v. Nichols)

1978 A fractured Supreme Court declares the affirmative action admissions program for the University of California Davis Medical School unconstitutional because it set aside a specific number of seats for black and Latino students. The Court rules that race can be a factor in university admissions, but it cannot be the deciding factor. (Regents of the University of California v. Bakke)

1982 The Supreme Court rejects tax exemptions for private religious schools that discriminate. (Bob Jones University v. U.S.; Goldboro Christian Schools v. U.S.)

1986 For the first time, a federal court finds that once a school district meets the Green factors, it can be released from its desegregation plan and returned to local control. (Riddick v. School Board of the City of Norfolk, Virginia)

1991 Emphasizing that court orders are not intended “to operate in perpetuity,” the Supreme Court makes it easier for formerly segregated school systems to fulfill their obligations under desegregation decrees. (Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell)

1992 The Supreme Court further speeds the end of desegregation cases, ruling that school systems can fulfill their obligations in an incremental fashion. (Freeman v. Pitts)

1995 The Supreme Court sets a new goal for desegregation plans: the return of schools to local control. (Missouri v. Jenkins)

1996 A federal appeals court prohibits the use of race in college and university admissions, ending affirmative action in Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi. (Hopwood v. Texas)

2001 White parents in Charlotte, N.C., schools successfully seek an end to the desegregation process and a bar to the use of race in making student assignments.

2003 The Supreme Court upholds diversity as a rationale for affirmative action programs in higher education admissions, but concludes that point systems are not appropriate. (Gratz v. Bollinger; Grutter v. Bollinger;)

A federal district court case affirms the value of racial diversity and race-conscious student assignment plans in K–12 education. (Lynn v. Comfort)


to avoid sending their children to schools with African Americans. As segregated public schools became desegregated, many African American teachers and principals lost their jobs. The composition of schools did change in the three decades following the Brown decision. In the mid-1960s only 2% of the African
American students in the United States attended integrated schools. By the late 1980s, 45% of them were in integrated schools.

Other ethnic groups also used the courts to demand an equitable education for their children. In Gong Lum v. Rice in Mississippi in 1927 a Chinese American girl sought the right to attend a white school by arguing that she was not black. The court ruled she was not white, giving the school the authority to determine the race of their students (Willoughby, 2004). A Mexican American student was allowed to attend an integrated school in California in the 1940s as a result of Mendez v. Westminster (Willoughby, 2004). In 1974 Chinese American students in San Francisco won the right to have their first language used in instruction in Lau v. Nichols. The Brown decision also served as the precursor for federal laws that supported educational equity for girls and women in Title IX, passed in 1972, and persons with disabilities in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in 1973.

By the mid-1980s the courts began lifting the federal court sanctions that had forced schools to integrate, stating that the federal requirements were meant to be temporary to overcome de jure segregation. Now that schools were no longer segregated by race, the easing of sanctions allowed school districts to return to neighborhood schools. Because of de facto segregation in communities, many neighborhood schools were comprised of students of the same race, returning integration to pre-1970 levels. At the beginning of the twenty-first century,

Black students are the most likely racial group to attend what researchers call “apartheid schools,” schools that are virtually all non-white and where poverty, limited resources, social strife and health problems abound. One-sixth of America’s black students attend these schools.

Whites are the most segregated group in the nation’s public schools. Only 14% of white students attend multiracial schools (where three or more racial groups are present).

Latino students are the most segregated minority group in U.S. schools. They are segregated by race and poverty; immigrant Latinos also are at risk of experiencing linguistic segregation.

Asian American students are the most integrated group in the nation’s public schools. Three-fourths of Asian Americans attend multiracial schools. (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2004, p. 58)

The goal of desegregation has changed from the physical integration of students within a school building to the achievement of equal learning opportunities and outcomes for all students. Court cases today are examining the unequal access of students of color to qualified teachers, advanced mathematics and science classes, gifted classes, and adequately funded schools. Civil rights groups are asking schools why students of color are disproportionately represented in nonacademic and special education classes and why the rates for school suspension and dropping out of school vary for different ethnic groups. As schools become more segregated again, educators have a greater responsibility for ensuring that all students learn regardless of the ethnic and racial composition of the school. Teachers will also have the responsibility for helping students understand that the world in which they are likely to work is multiethnic and multiracial, unlike the school they may be attending.
Ethnic and Racial Group Identity

Children become aware of gender, race, ethnicity, and disabilities between the ages of 2 and 5. At the same time, they become sensitive to the positive and negative biases associated with those groups (Derman-Sparks, Phillips, & Hilliard, 1997). Often, this distinction is made because of the physical characteristics of individuals or the distinct language and shops in a neighborhood. Other times, the distinction may be based on observed behaviors that suggest a particular ethnic background.

Students in a classroom are likely to come from several different racial and ethnic groups, although physical differences are not always identifiable. Two white students who appear to be from similar backgrounds may actually identify strongly with their Irish or Polish backgrounds. The two families may live next door to each other in similar homes, but the insides of the homes may be furnished or decorated differently. The churches they attend may differ, as well as their ideas about raising children and maintaining a family. Their political ideologies may differ markedly. Yet, students often are viewed by teachers as coming from the same cultural background if they have similar racial characteristics, even though their families may be Vietnamese, Hmong, Korean, Cambodian, or Indian American. An educator should not assume that all students who look alike come from the same ethnic background. Factors other than physical characteristics must be used to determine a student’s ethnicity. Many intragroup differences exist that may have a great influence on student behavior in the classroom.

Many individuals and families in the United States maintain ties with their national origin or ethnic group by participating in family and cultural traditions.
CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN TEACHING

Student Conflict between Family and Peer Values

Wing Tek Lau is a sixth-grade student in a predominantly white and African American Southern community. He and his parents emigrated from Hong Kong four years ago. His uncle, an engineer at a local high-tech company, had encouraged Wing Tek's father to immigrate to this country and open a Chinese restaurant. The restaurant is the only Chinese restaurant in the community, and it was an instant success. Mr. Lau and his family have enjoyed considerable acceptance in both their business and their neighborhood. Wing Tek and his younger sister have also enjoyed academic success at school and appear to be well liked by the other students.

One day when Mrs. Baca, Wing Tek's teacher, calls him by name, he announces before the class, "My American name is Kevin. Please, everybody call me Kevin from now on." Mrs. Baca and Wing Tek's classmates honor this request, and Wing Tek is "Kevin" from then on.

Three weeks later, Mr. and Mrs. Lau make an appointment to see Mrs. Baca. When the teacher makes reference to "Kevin," Mrs. Lau says, "Who are you talking about? Who is Kevin? We came here to talk about our son, Wing Tek."

"But I thought his American name was Kevin. That's what he asked us to call him from now on," Mrs. Baca replies.

"That child," Mrs. Lau says in disgust, "is a disgrace to our family."

"We have heard his sister call him by that name, but she said it was just a joke," Mr. Lau adds. "We came to see you because we are having problems with him in our home. Wing Tek refuses to speak Chinese to us. He argues with us about going to his Chinese lessons on Saturday with the other Chinese students in the community. He says he does not want to eat Chinese food anymore. He says that he is an American now and wants pizza, hamburgers, and tacos. What are you people teaching these children in school? Is there no respect for family, no respect for our culture?"

Mrs. Baca, an acculturated Mexican American who was raised in East Los Angeles, begins to put things together. Wing Tek, in his attempt to ensure his acceptance by his classmates, has chosen to acculturate to an extreme, to the point of rejecting his family heritage. He wants to be as "American" as anyone else in the class, perhaps more so. Like Wing Tek, Mrs. Baca had acculturated linguistically and in other ways, but she had never given up her Hispanic values. She knows the internal turmoil Wing Tek is experiencing.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is Wing Tek wrong in his desire to acculturate?
2. Are Mr. and Mrs. Lau wrong in wanting their son to maintain their traditional family values?
3. What can Mrs. Baca do to bring about a compromise?
4. What can Mrs. Baca do in the classroom to resolve the problem or at least to lessen the problem?

To answer these questions online, go to the Critical Incidents in Teaching module for this chapter of the Companion Website.

ETHNICITY

Many definitions have been proposed for the term ethnic group. Some writers describe ethnic identity as national origin, religion, and race. In some cases, the definition has been expanded to include gender, class, and lifestyles. The most
basic definition focuses on an individual’s national origin or origins. Of course, a person’s cultural identity is determined by the interaction of one’s ethnicity with race, religion, gender, class, language, age, and exceptionalities.

A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and culture. Through wars and political realignments, nations change over time because boundaries are moved (or removed) as a result of political negotiations. However, new boundaries do not always translate into new national identities; it may take generations for such a conversion.

Ethnic identity is determined by the native country of your ancestors. The strongest support for the country of origin is usually based on continuing family ties in that country. These ties are especially strong when family members regularly visit relatives and friends in the country of origin. These links often weaken after several generations. Without extensive tracing of the family lineage, most members of ethnic groups who have been in this country for several generations probably could not identify relatives in their country of origin. Yet, support for the country of origin often continues, particularly in the aftermath of natural disasters when ethnic groups across the United States organize to provide relief. When Congressional cuts are being proposed in foreign aid or conflicts develop between groups in other countries, ethnic groups sometimes lobby on behalf of their country of origin.

We all belong to one or more ethnic groups. For those of us born in the United States, one of our ethnic groups is American. The national origins of our ancestors is reflected in our hyphenated ethnic identification (e.g., German American or Chinese American). A common bond with an ethnic group is developed through family, friends, and neighbors with whom the same intimate characteristics of living are shared. These are the people invited to baptisms, marriages, funerals, and family reunions. They are the people with whom we feel the most comfortable. They know the meaning of our behavior; they share the same language and nonverbal patterns, traditions, and customs. Endogamy (that is, marriage within the group), segregated residential areas, and restriction of activities with the dominant group help preserve ethnic cohesiveness across generations. The ethnic group also allows for the maintenance of group cohesiveness. It helps sustain and enhance the ethnic identity of its members. It establishes the social networks and communicative patterns that are important for the group’s optimization of its position in society.

It is important to note, however, that the character of an ethnic group changes over time, becoming different in a number of ways from the culture in the country of origin. Members within ethnic groups may develop different attitudes and behaviors based on their experiences in the United States and the conditions in the country of origin at the time of emigration. Recent immigrants may have little in common with other members of their ethnic group whose ancestors immigrated a century, or even 20 years before. Ethnic communities undergo constant change in population characteristics, locations, occupations, educational levels, and political and economic struggles. All of these aspects affect the nature of the group and its members as they become hyphenated Americans.
Opportunities for Reflection

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Ethnic Identity. A person does not have to live in the same community with other members of the ethnic group to continue to identify with the group. Many second- and third-generation children move from their ethnic communities, integrating into the suburbs—a move that is easier to accomplish if they look white and speak standard English. Although many Americans are generations removed from an immigrant status, some continue to consciously emphasize their ethnicity as a meaningful basis of their identity. They may organize or join ethnic social clubs and organizations to revitalize their identification with their national origin. They can be ethnic when they want to be. It is characterized by a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of one's ancestral homeland. As the dominant society allows members of an ethnic group to assimilate, particular ethnic groups become less distinct. Ethnicity then becomes voluntary for group members—a process much more likely to occur when members are no longer labeled as ethnic by society.

In the 2000 census, the European heritages selected by the most people were German (15%), Irish (11%), English (9%), Italian (6%), Polish (3%), and French (3%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Twenty-two percent of the population reported multiple ancestries because they identify with two or more national origins (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). They may identify with one ethnic group more than others, or they may view their ethnicity as just American. At the same time, teachers and others with whom students interact may continue to respond to them primarily on the basis of their identifiable race or ethnicity. What is your ethnic identity? How is your ethnic identity reflected in the way you live or the activities in which you participate? How important is your ethnic group in your cultural identity?

An individual’s degree of ethnic identity is influenced early in that person’s life by whether or not the family members recognize or promote ethnicity as an important part of their identity. Sometimes, the choice about how ethnic one
should be imposed, particularly for members of oppressed ethnic groups. When the ethnic group believes that strong and loyal ethnic identity is necessary to maintain group solidarity, the pressure of other members of the group makes it difficult to withdraw from the group. For many members of the group, their ethnic identity provides them with the security of belonging and knowing who they are. The ethnic identity becomes the primary source of identification, and they feel no need to identify themselves differently. In fact, they may find it emotionally very difficult to sever their primary identification with the group. Some families fight the assimilative aspects of schooling that draw children into adopting the dress, language, music, and values of their peers from the dominant culture. These are usually immigrant families, families with origins other than Europe, and families who are either not Christian or conservative Christians. They are trying to maintain the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that are important in their cultures.

**Group Assimilation.** Ethnic group identity is reinforced by the political and economic barriers established by the dominant society to prevent the assimilation of oppressed groups. Ethnicity is strongest within groups that develop group solidarity through similar lifestyles, common social and economic interests, and a high degree of interpersonal connections. Historically, oppressed groups have been segregated from the dominant group and have developed enclaves in cities and suburbs that help members maintain a strong ethnic identity.

Chinatown, Little Italy, Harlem, and Little Saigon are examples of ethnic enclaves in the nation’s cities. The suburbs also include pockets of families from the same ethnic backgrounds. Throughout the country are small towns and surrounding farmland where the population comes from the same ethnic background, all the residents being African American, German American, Danish American, Anglo American, or Mexican American. These individuals may be culturally encapsulated, so that most of their primary relationships, and many of their secondary relationships, are with members of their own ethnic group. They may not have the opportunity to interact with members of other ethnic groups or to recognize or share the richness of a second culture that exists in another setting. They may never learn how to live with people who speak a different language or dialect, eat different foods, and value things that their own ethnic group does not value. They often learn to fear or denigrate individuals from other ethnic groups primarily because the ways of others seem strange and incorrect. White ethnic groups are particularly vulnerable to knowing only their own group and its culture.

With few exceptions, however, the ethnic enclave does not increase in size. Families move away because of job opportunities and economic rewards that are available outside the community. Children who move away for college often do not return. Yet, some families continue to maintain a strong identity with the ethnic group even after they have moved away. Children are less likely to maintain such a strong identity because many of their primary relationships are with members of other ethnic groups.

Unlike their white counterparts, most people of color are forced out of their ethnic encapsulation to achieve social and economic mobility. Many secondary relationships are with members of other ethnic groups because
they work with or for members of the dominant group. Members of the dominant group, however, rarely take the opportunity to develop even secondary relationships with African, Asian, Latino, or Native Americans. Dominant group members could spend their lives not knowing or participating in the culture of another ethnic group.

Identifying the degree of students’ assimilation into the dominant culture may be helpful in determining appropriate instructional strategies. Such information can help the educator understand students’ values, particularly the students’ and their families’ expectations for school. It also allows the teacher to more accurately determine the learning styles of students so that the teaching style can be effectively adapted to individual differences. The only way to know the importance of ethnicity in the lives of students is to listen to them. Familiarity and participation with the community from which students come also help the educator know the importance of ethnicity to students and their families.

**RACE**

Are racial groups also ethnic groups? In the United States, many people use the two terms interchangeably. Racial groups include many ethnic groups, and ethnic groups may include members of one or more racial groups. *How has such mixed usage of the terms developed in this country? How do you describe your race? How would others describe your race? What race has the greatest advantage in society?*

Race is a concept that was developed by physical anthropologists to describe the physical characteristics of people in the world more than a century ago—a practice that has now been discredited. It is not a stable category for organizing and differentiating people. Instead, it is a social-historical concept dependent on society’s perception that differences exist and that these differences are important. Some theorists suggest that race, as used in the United States, is equivalent to *caste* in other countries. Throughout U.S. history, racial identification has been used by policymakers and much of the population to classify groups of people as inferior or superior to other racial groups, resulting in discrimination, and inequality against persons of color.

Many persons with Northern and Western European ancestry view themselves as the natural, rightful leaders of the United States and the world. Until 1952, immigrants had to be white to be eligible for naturalized citizenship. At one time, slaves and Native Americans were perceived as so inferior to the dominant group that each individual was counted by the government as only a fraction of a person. This phenomenon of racial consciousness in the United States was repeated on the West Coast in the late nineteenth century when Chinese immigrants were charged an additional tax. When Southern and Eastern Europeans immigrated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were viewed as members of an inferior race. However, these Europeans were eligible for citizenship because they were white; persons from most other continents were not eligible. Arab American immigrants, for example, argued in courts that they were white so that they could become citizens.

In 1916, *The Passing of the Great Race* by Madison Grant detailed the U.S. racist ideology. Northern and Western Europeans of the *Nordic race* were considered by the powerful to be the political and military geniuses of the world. Protecting the
purity of the Nordic race became such an emotional and popular issue for the majority of U.S. citizens that laws were passed to severely limit immigration from any region except Northern European countries. Miscegenation laws in many states legally prevented the marriage of whites to members of other races until the U.S. Supreme Court declared the laws unconstitutional in 1967. However, nativism reappeared in the 1990s in resolutions, referenda, and legislation in a number of states that denied education to illegal immigrants, restricted communication to the English language, and limited the prenatal care and preschool services that were available to low-income families who are disproportionately of color.

Identification of Race. Once race identification became codified in this country, it was acceptable, even necessary at times, to identify oneself by race. One of the reasons was to be able to track the participation of groups in schools, colleges, and professional fields to determine discriminatory outcomes. Federal forms and reports classify the population on the basis of a mixture of racial and pan-ethnic categorizations as shown in Figure 3.2.

A problem with identifying the U.S. population by such broad categories is that they tell little about the people in these groups. Whether a person is American born or an immigrant may have significance in how he or she identifies himself or herself. These pan-ethnic classifications impose boundaries that do not always reflect how group members see themselves.

Although non-Hispanic whites are numerically dominant, this classification includes many different ethnic groups. Neither the ethnic identification nor the actual racial heritage of African Americans is recognized. Hispanics represent different racial groups and mixtures of racial groups, as well as distinct ethnic groups whose members identify themselves as Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Spanish Americans, and Cuban Americans. This category also includes

Figure 3.2
Pan-ethnic and racial composition of the United States in 2002.
persons with roots in numerous Central and South American countries. When Hispanics were asked to declare their race as black or white in the 2000 census, many rejected the classification and declared their race as Hispanic.

The pan-ethnic classification of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans includes both individuals whose families have been here for generations and those who are first-generation immigrants. Many do not have much more in common than that their countries of origin are part of the same continent. They are “Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Bornean, Burmese, Cambodian, Celbesian, Cernan, Chamorro, Chinese, East Indian, Filipino, Hawaiian, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Okinawan, Samoan, Sikkimese, Singaporean, Sri Lankan, and Vietnamese” (Young & Pang, 1995, p. 5).

African Americans range in skin color along a continuum from black to white. Thus, it is not the color of their skin that defines them. Their identification is based, in part, on sharing a common origin that can be traced to numerous African tribes and European and Native American nations. They have become a single ethnic group in the United States because they share a common history, language, economic life, and culture that have developed over centuries of living in the United States. They are a cohesive group, in part, because of continuing discrimination as reflected in racial profiling by police, segregated schools and housing, and treatment in shopping centers and on the job (National Conference for Community and Justice, 2000). Because individuals appear to be African American is not an indication that they always identify themselves as African Americans. Some identify themselves as blacks; others with a specific ethnic group—for example, Puerto Rican or Somalian American or West Indian. Africans who are recent immigrants generally identify themselves ethnically by nation or tribe of origin.

The number of persons with multiracial backgrounds is growing. Although multiracial individuals made up only 2.4% of the population in 2002, the number of interracial couples has increased nearly tenfold since 1960 (Tafoya, 2000). Half of the children of Asian immigrants marry non-Asians, and 35% of the children of Latino immigrants marry members of other groups (Diversity Data, 2000). The belief of the racial superiority of whites is reflected in cases of mixed racial heritage. Individuals of black and white parentage are usually classified as black, not white; those of Japanese and white heritage usually are classified as nonwhite.

Many whites see themselves as raceless. They are the norm against which everyone else is “other.” They have equated race with European ethnicity in which the social system is viewed as open and individuals can attain success with hard work. This view allows ethnicity to disappear as a determinant of life chances after a group has been in the country for a while. Many whites have their own stories or narratives of the mobility they or their families have experienced. They believe that their mobility was based totally on individual achievement, not assisted by their whiteness. They cannot understand why members of other groups have not experienced the same success. They deny that racial inequality has any impact on their ability to achieve. They seldom acknowledge that white oppression of people of color around the world has contributed to the subordinate status of those groups. Most whites are unable to acknowledge that they are privileged in our social, political, and economic systems. Just as gender studies should not focus solely on girls and women, the study of race should not be limited to persons of color. Whiteness
Chapter 3  Ethnicity and Race

America in Black and White: A Search for Common Ground

Society forms impressions of people every day based solely on appearance. Many people make judgments about intelligence, happiness, and earning potential without any real information. Do you think our society in general continues to judge people based on skin tone, consciously or unconsciously?

The issue of colorism is as big an issue now as ever. In this video segment you will see people working in different industries, and they are all saying the same thing: it’s easier to get a job if you are a lighter skinned African American than if you are a darker skinned African American. In addition, this segment shows the disparity between salaries of lighter versus darker skinned men and women and the judgments people make about them simply based on the color of their skin.

1. What do you think of the experiment Professor Midge Wilson of DePaul University conducted with her introductory psychology class?

2. Do you think it is fair to say that most college students would respond in the same way as those chosen by Professor Wilson?

3. How do you think college students on your campus would respond? What can you do as an individual to change this way of thinking?

To answer these questions online, go to the ABC News Video Insight module for this chapter of the Companion Website.

and privilege must be addressed to expose the privilege and power it bestows on its members in the maintenance of an inequitable system.

Racial Diversity. Over the next few decades, whites will comprise less and less of the U.S. population. More than one third of the nation is African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American. These groups will comprise more than 40% of the population by 2020, and 50% of the population by 2040 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). This pattern is not unique to the United States. “Of the 5.7 billion people in the world, only 17% are white, a figure that is expected to drop to 9% by 2010” (Diversity Data, 2000).

Two variables contribute to the significant population growth of persons of color. Half of the 2 million annual increase in the U.S. population can be attributed to immigration. Seventy percent of the immigrants are from Latin America or Asia; 20% are white (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). The second variable contributing to the changing face of America is the birth rate. In the baby boom years of 1946 to 1964, the U.S. population grew dramatically, with a birth rate of 2.9 children per woman. Today the birth rate is approximately 2.1, the highest among industrialized nations. The differential birth rate among racial and ethnic groups is contributing to differing growth patterns. White women in the United States are having an average of 1.8 children, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders average 1.9, Native American and Alaska Natives average 2.1, African Americans average 2.2, and Latinos average 2.9.
Race has been important in this country because racial identity singled out certain people who have been treated inferior to whites of Northern and Western Europe. As whites lose their majority status, will the power that some think is their natural right be reduced as well? Will egalitarianism across groups become a more achievable goal? Some white extremists believe that they must fight to maintain their supremacy. This movement could lead to greater conflict among groups if a large number of people actually believe that one group should be superior to all others. Or, the changing demographics could lead to a more equitable sharing of power and societal benefits across all groups.

Although race has no scientific significance in describing people, it is a social construct that endures in the United States to classify groups. It is nearly impossible to be color-blind.

**Pause to Reflect 3.2**

- What characteristics do you attribute to whites, blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans?
- Do you view some groups more positively than others?
- What has influenced your perceptions of your own group and others?
- How will you overcome any negative stereotypes you hold to ensure that you do not discriminate against students in your classroom?

*To answer these questions online, go to the Pause to Reflect module for this chapter of the Companion Website.*

**Racial Identity.** Racial identity is influenced by one’s family and by reflections of people who look like you in newspapers, on television, and in movies. How racial groups are stereotyped influences the interactions between members of different racial groups. If a group is seen as aggressive and violent, the reaction of the second group may be fear and protection. The construct of whiteness by many students of color may be based on distrust of whites that has grown out of their own or their communities’ lived experiences. Unlike most whites, persons of color see the privilege of whiteness and, in many cases, have suffered the consequences of the lack of privilege and power in society. Their oppression by the dominant group is often a unifying theme around which persons of color coalesce (Tatum, 1997).

The racial identity of blacks and whites evolves with education and life experiences, but may be suppressed at any stage before full development (Cross, 1992; Helms, 1990; Tatum, 1997). Psychologist William E. Cross (1992) has identified six stages in the racial development of African Americans. Black children develop a belief that white is better based on their knowledge and interaction with the dominant culture. Adolescent youth often experience an event that makes them acutely aware of racism and more conscious of the significance of race in society. During this period, they are often angry about the stereotyping and racism they are experiencing or see others experience. Acceptance by their African American peers becomes very important, and acting white or hanging with whites is frowned upon. In young adulthood—
VIDEO INSIGHT

Acting White: Hurtful Accusations Among Black Students

Almost every black student in any school can define "acting white." Underachieving black students often attribute academic achievement as acting white, and attack achieving students for excelling in school, speaking Standard English, listening to the "wrong" music, or having white friends. Some Black students may perceive the achieving students as being traitors or disloyal to their race because of these behaviors. By adopting values common to the dominant culture, they are seen as trying to behave like whites and ignoring their own racial history and experiences. As a result, many black students do not study as hard as achieving white students and do not choose the more challenging advanced placement courses. Latino students have indicated that they too have experienced this same phenomenon. This is a major problem for students of color who want to achieve academically, or to go on to higher education.

1. Must these students learn to function biculturally and bidialectally?
2. What can we as educators do to address this problem?

To answer these questions online, go to the ABC News Video Insight module for this chapter of the Companion Website.

often when in college—an African American develops a “strong desire to surround oneself with symbols of one’s racial identity, and actively seek out opportunities to learn about one’s own history and culture, with the support of same-race peers” (Tatum, 1997, p. 76). The next stage of development is internalization in which individuals are secure with their own race and able to develop meaningful relationships with whites who respect their racial identity. In the last stage individuals have a very positive sense of their racial identity and develop a commitment to the issues of African Americans as a group.

Whites also go through developmental stages as they develop their racial identity and abandon racism. At the beginning, whites usually do not recognize the significance of race. They accept the common stereotypes of persons of color and do not believe that racism pervades society. As they become aware of white racism and privilege, they become uncomfortable and feel guilt, shame, and anger about racism. They begin to recognize that they are prejudiced. In the next stage, they become silent about racism and are frustrated at being labeled a member of a group, rather than an individual. As they become more aware of institutional racism, they begin to unlearn their own racism. In this stage they are often self-conscious and feel guilty about their whiteness. The development of a positive white identity allows them to move beyond the role of the victimizer, causing their feelings of guilt and shame to subside. In the last stage, they become an ally to persons of color and are able to confront institutional racism and work toward its elimination (Helms, 1990).

Elementary and secondary students will be at different stages of developing their racial identity. They may be angry, feel guilty, be ethnocentric, or be defensive—behaviors and feelings that may erupt in class as Denise Williams
found in the vignette that opened this chapter. Educators must remember that students of color face societal constraints and restrictions that seldom affect white students. Such recognition is essential in the development of instructional programs and schools to effectively serve diverse populations who as yet do not share equally in the benefits that education offers.

Racism

A crucial fact in understanding racism is that whites see themselves as superior to persons and groups of color, and as a result exercise their power to prevent people of color from securing the prestige, power, and privilege held by whites. Many members of the dominant group do not acknowledge the existence of external impingements that make it much more difficult for people of color to shed their subordinate status than it was for their own European ancestors. They ignore the fact that some people of color have adopted the cultural values and standards of the dominant group to a greater degree than many white ethnic groups. Yet, discriminatory policies and practices prevent them from sharing equally in society’s benefits with whites. In addition, the opportunities to gain qualifications with which people of color could compete equally with whites have been severely restricted throughout most of U.S. history.

Many whites declare they are not racist. They listen to rap music, dress like black urban youth, and respect African American athletes. They argue that they have never discriminated against a person of color and that they cannot be blamed for events of 40 or 200 years ago. They take no responsibility for society’s racism. In a discussion of color-blind privilege, Gallagher (2003) characterizes this dichotomous thinking:

What are we to make of a young white man from the suburbs who listens to hip-hop, wears baggy hip-hop pants, a baseball cap turned sideways, unlaced sneakers and an oversized shirt emblazoned with a famous NBA player, who, far from shouting racial epithets, lists a number of racial minorities as his heroes? It is now possible to define oneself as not being racist because of the clothes you wear, the celebrities you like or the music you listen to while believing that blacks or Latinos are disproportionately poor or over-represented in low pay, dead end jobs because they are part of a de-based, culturally deficient group. (p. 35)

Whites have little or no experience with discrimination and often do not believe that members of other racial groups are discriminated against. Because it is illegal to deny persons of color access to housing, schools, and jobs, many whites think that segregation and discrimination no longer exist. One reason for this misperception is that whites seldom experience discrimination and think that others have similar experiences to their own. In a national survey by the National Conference for Community and Justice (2000) on the state of intergroup relations in the United States, 42% of the African Americans reported incidents of discrimination in the past month, as compared with 13% of the whites, 16%
America in Black and White: South Carolina High School Drug Raid

School drug searches have unfortunately become commonplace across the United States. Many across the country saw video clips on the national news of police with drawn guns and snarling dogs frightening students in the hallway of a South Carolina high school while searching for drugs. In an effort to rid the school of what he considered a drug problem, the principal arranged a surprise raid with the local police. While the school is predominantly white, the students detained in the raid were mostly black. No drugs or weapons were found in the raid.

As soon as the video clips were shown locally and across the nation, the backlash was instantaneous. Whites and blacks saw the same video, yet interpreted the incident very differently. African Americans have tended to view the incident as racism with insensitivity on the part of whites. Whites on the other hand see the African Americans as paranoid and overreacting. What is important for educators to understand is while many whites view racism as a thing of the past, individuals of color have different perceptions of life in the United States. Educators must carefully determine the ramifications of their decisions when it relates to race.

1. Why do some people see this incident as racism and racial profiling of black students?
2. Why do many white observers of this incident not see it as a reflection of racism?
3. Why do you agree or not agree with the action taken by the principal in the South Carolina high school?
4. What are the ramifications of the principal’s decision on racial relations in the schools?

To answer these questions online, go to the ABC News Video Insight module for this chapter of the Companion Website.
actions of police or others, and strikes by workers. Native American and white conflicts were common in the European American attempt to subjugate the native peoples.

What are the reasons for continued interethnic conflict? Discriminatory practices have protected the superior status of the dominant group for centuries. When other ethnic groups try to share more equitably in the rewards and privileges of society, the dominant group must concede some of its advantages. Most recently, this concern about giving up some advantages of the dominant group has been reflected in reverse discrimination cases as a reaction to affirmative action programs. As long as one ethnic or racial group has an institutional advantage over others, some intergroup conflict will exist.

Competition for economic resources can also contribute to intergroup conflict. As economic conditions become tighter, fewer jobs are available. Discriminatory practices in the past have forced people of color into positions with the least seniority. As a result, when jobs are cut back, disproportionately high numbers of persons of color are laid off. The tension between ethnic groups increases as members of specific groups determine that they disproportionately suffer the hardships resulting from economic depression. Conflict sometimes occurs between oppressed groups when they are forced to share limited societal resources, such as affordable housing and access to quality education programs. Conflict as a result of inequitable distribution of economic rewards is likely to continue as long as members of groups can observe and feel those inequities.

Perceptions of intergroup relations differ across racial and ethnic groups. Less than half of young adults believe that race relations in the United States are very good or somewhat good, but more than 70% of persons over 65 rate them as very good or somewhat good (Gallup, 2004b). Fifty-six percent of whites are satisfied with the state of race relations as compared to 49% of persons of color with Latinos being somewhat less satisfied and African Americans the least satisfied (Gallup, 2004a). At the same time, 60% of the Hispanics, 62% of the whites, and 72% of the blacks believe that race relations will always be a problem (Gallup, 2004b). Intergroup tensions and conflicts are often the result of one group receiving more rewards from society than others. Persons of color overwhelmingly perceive whites as having too much power. They also perceive whites as having greater opportunities for job advancement, equal pay, and fair and unbiased treatment by the police and media. Most whites do recognize

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that persons of color do not have the same opportunities as they do, but the percentage who acknowledge these differences is smaller than any other group.

During the past 50 years, educational strategies have been developed to reduce and overcome intergroup conflicts. These strategies have focused on training teachers to be effective in intergroup or human relations; on attempting to change the prejudicial attitudes of teachers; on fighting institutional discrimination through affirmative action and civil rights legislation; on encouraging changes in textbooks and other resources to more accurately reflect the multi-ethnic nature of society; and on attempting to remove discriminatory behavior from classroom interactions and classroom practices. All of these strategies are important to combat prejudice and discrimination in the educational setting. Alone or in combination, however, the strategies are not enough, but that does not diminish the need for professional educators to further develop the strategies. It is not a sign of failure, but a recognition that prejudice, discrimination, and racism are diseases that infect all of society.

**HATE GROUPS**

White privilege is sometimes taken to the extreme as members try to protect their power by preaching hate against other groups that are considered inferior. Since World War II, overt acts of prejudice have decreased dramatically. In the early 1940s, the majority of whites supported segregation of and discrimination against, blacks. Today, most whites support policies against racial discrimination and prejudice.

Nevertheless, intolerance of other groups and violence against their members continue to exist. Many communities have experienced cross burnings, swastika graffiti, and, in some instances, hate crimes against people of color, non-Christians, and gays and lesbians. The Southern Poverty Law Center reports that

- Every hour someone commits a hate crime.
- Every day at least eight blacks, three whites, three gays, three Jews, and one Latino become hate crime victims.
- Every week a cross is burned. (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2000, p. 1)

The FBI reports that hate crimes are increasingly perpetuated against Asian Americans and homosexuals. Although most hate crimes were historically committed in the South against African Americans and Jews, the majority today occur in the North and West (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2000).

The increasing number of individuals of color in the United States, television programming to accommodate new language groups, and new temples and mosques, has forever changed the U.S. landscape. These visible symbols of growth and change have become threatening to some individuals, whose comfort level does not extend beyond white Anglo-Saxon control or Judeo-Christian religious traditions. Some of these extremists have responsibility for public policy. An example is a state board of education member who verbally attacked Buddhists and Muslims and referred to Islam as a cult—worshipers of Lucifer (Eck, 2000).

Because of the increasing adversarial relationship that developed between fundamentalist Muslims in the Middle East and the United States, American Muslims have been the targets of vicious attacks during the Persian Gulf War.
FOCUS YOUR CULTURAL LENS: DEBATE

Should Proms Be Segregated?

Many schools in communities with diverse populations are racially and ethnically integrated. Developing positive cross-cultural communications and interactions has long been a goal of schools that are seriously trying to integrate. However, practices in schools are not supportive of this goal when students are segregated in bilingual classes, advanced placement courses, special education classes, and gifted programs when students from one racial or ethnic group are disproportionately over- or underrepresented. Students often separate themselves by their racial or ethnic group at lunchtime in the school cafeteria, in after-school activities, in their choices of extracurricular activities, and in work groups in the classroom. The integration of another school tradition is being threatened in a number of communities. Students who do not feel welcome at their high school prom are organizing their own proms for students from the same racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, or disability group (Richard, 2004). Schools in the South that have for years sponsored segregated proms for black and white students have been assailed for not integrating this social event. Does support for segregated events fly in the face of the goal for integration or support the preferences of each racial, ethnic, or other group?

FOR
- Students from the same racial or ethnic group prefer to attend proms with members of their own groups because they like the same music and food.
- Integrated proms favor one group’s preference for music and refreshments over another, which does not treat groups equally.

AGAINST
- School-sponsored events like a prom should support the school’s goal for integration in all of its activities.
- The separation of groups in social situations like a prom exacerbates poor intergroup relations.

Questions
1. Why do some students not feel welcome at their high school proms?
2. What could school officials do to ensure that the needs of a diverse group of students are met at school proms and other school activities?
3. When would you be in favor of a segregated prom? Why?

To answer these questions online, go to the Focus Your Cultural Lens module for this chapter of the Companion Website.


in the early 1990s and after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001. As a part of this violence, mosques have been burned. While it is undeniable that Islamic terrorists have been responsible for some terrorist attacks, the overwhelming majority of American Muslims vigorously condemn terrorism and are model citizens. Nevertheless, they are routinely wrongly accused of being terrorists or sympathizers. Muslims have not been the only victims of religious intolerance. Arsonists have also victimized Jewish synagogues and black churches.

Religious differences are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.
Hate also occurs on college campuses. The U.S. Department of Education reported 487 hate crimes on campuses in 2001. Many other victims do not report the crimes because of fear of retaliation or the belief that nothing will be done. The Southern Poverty Law Center described a few of the incidents:

At SUNY Maritime College in the Bronx, 21 Arab students flee after a series of assaults and incidents of racist harassment. At Brown University in Rhode Island, a black senior is beaten by three white students who tell her she is a “quota” who doesn’t belong. At the State University of New York at Binghamton, three students are charged in a racially motivated assault that left an Asian American student with a fractured skull. A Harvard resident tutor quits after being subjected to homophobic vandalism. E-mail threats and slurs are sent to 30,000 students and faculty at Stanford University, along with others at many other schools. Holocaust deniers publish their screed in campus newspapers and, in a few cases, are backed up ideologically by professors. (Hate on Campus, 2000, p. 8)

Estimates suggest that there are now more than 751 hate group chapters in the United States with the majority located east of the Mississippi River (Potok, 2004). While freedom of speech, guaranteed by the First Amendment, is one of the most cherished values in the country, it is also one of the variables that contributes to the proliferation of hate groups. Each individual’s freedom of speech is guaranteed, and this includes those who express messages of hate in their speeches, writings, and now the Internet. The message of hate groups is attractive to some citizens who want to blame others for their misfortunes. Only 5% of the hate crimes are committed by members of these groups. They are committed by young males who have adopted the hate rhetoric, but don’t usually act from a deeply held ideology (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2000).

Recruitment efforts by hate groups often target areas of the country that have experienced economic and racial change, such as a factory layoff or increased diversity in a school as a result of desegregation. Other recruits are sometimes angry about economic conditions that have led to the loss of jobs in their communities. Rather than blaming corporations that are economizing and moving jobs to sources of cheaper labor, they blame African Americans, women, Arabs, Jews, or the government. Hate group organizers convince new recruits that it is members of other groups who are taking their jobs and being pandered to by government programs. Members of the white extremist groups believe that whites are the superior race and that the government and others are emasculating their white power and privilege. A student contact in a school can provide information about the mood and anger of students that might make the school a potential candidate for recruitment (Youth and Hate, 1999).

Many hate groups attract individuals with their appearance of religious affiliation. Leaders are sometimes referred to as pastor. Some use “Church” in their name. Many use Biblical scriptures on their websites. Some use the name of “Jesus” and refer to their efforts as “His work” and themselves as “His People.”

Many of the hate groups have developed sophisticated websites and support an ultraviolent white power music industry (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2004). Some hate groups have links on their websites that are developed primarily for school-age youngsters. Some contain cartoons, others crossword puzzles for children. All contain a message of hate. Because so many children have
become proficient in the use of computers and in surfing the web, it has become imperative for parents and educators to be able to recognize online hate and to be able to minimize the risks to their children and students. Software that will block or filter hate group websites is available through Internet providers and software dealers.

Educational Implications

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Latinos replaced African Americans as the largest non-European group in the United States. Within a few years, the number of Latino students will also surpass the number of African American students in schools. Some states and areas of the country are much more diverse than others; for example, the West has the largest concentration of students of color; the Midwest the least. Students of color are more than 60% of the student population in California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and the District of Columbia (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). They are over half of the student population in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and more than 40% of the student population in Arizona, Georgia, Maryland, New York, and South Carolina. The highest concentration (25%) of African American students is in the South; Latinos make up 32% of the students in the West (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The majority of the population in many urban schools is comprised of students of color. Figure 3.3 shows how the diversity of school-aged children and youth has changed over the past 15 years. White students are projected to comprise less than half of the student population by 2050. These demographics obviously have a profound impact on schools throughout the United States.

Schools are the recipients of today’s young immigrants. Education Week reports, for example, “Broward County, Fla.—the nation’s fifth-largest district, with nearly

Figure 3.3
The changing diversity of the school-age population.
Ethnicity and race play an important role in the lives of many students and communities. Membership in oppressed groups has a significant impact on students’ perceptions of themselves and their behavior and performance in school. Ethnicity and race are significant for educators because their cultural background and experiences may be incongruent with the cultural experiences of the students. Teachers themselves may stereotype students who have a racial or ethnic background different than their own. The majority of teachers are white females who are charged with teaching the majority of students of color. Figure 3.4 shows that teachers of color are either not being recruited or retained in our schools. Thus, white teachers must become aware of the cultures of the students in the schools to which they are assigned.

This incongruence may contribute to students not feeling their cultures are reflected in school, sometimes leading to their dropping out of school or not participating in meaningful ways. More students of color than white students are not actively engaged in their schoolwork, too often dropping out of school, in part, because they don’t see the payoff in completing high school. Only 77% of 18- to 21-year-olds have graduated from high school with Asian Americans having the highest graduation rates. Seventy-two percent of African American young adults are high school graduates. Native American and Latino students are less likely to graduate from high school (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

ACKNOWLEDGING RACE AND ETHNICITY IN SCHOOLS

Teachers often declare that they are color-blind, that they do not see a student’s color and treat all students equally regardless of race. The problem is that color blindness helps maintain white privilege because it fails to recognize the
existence of racial inequality in schools (Gallagher, 2003). Teachers do not usually confront issues of race in schools and classrooms, in part because race is not supposed to matter. Teachers’ discomfort becomes intertwined with their own uncertainties about race and their possible complicity in maintaining racial inequities. How comfortable do you feel with handling issues of race in the classroom? How can you ensure that you are not racially discriminating against students of color in your classroom?

Race and ethnicity do matter to many students and their families, and do have an impact on the communications and interactions with teachers. Students of color are reminded of their race on almost a daily basis as they face discriminatory practices and attitudes. Rather than pretending that race and ethnicity do not exist, teachers should acknowledge the differences and be aware of ways culture can influence learning. Equity does not mean sameness; students can be treated differently, as long as the treatment is fair and appropriate, to accomplish the goal of student learning.

The ethnic communities to which students belong provide the real-life examples teachers should draw on to teach. Knowing students’ ethnic and cultural experiences and how subject matter interacts with students’ reality is important in designing effective strategies to engage students in learning. Successful teachers ensure that students learn the academic skills needed to compete effectively in the dominant workplace. In the process they acknowledge and respect the ethnicity of their students and the community in which the school is located to prevent students from becoming alienated from their homes, their community, and their culture. Too many students of color are not learning what is needed to perform at accepted levels on standardized tests. In fact, the achievement of many students of color decreases the longer they stay in school.

CONFRONTING RACISM IN CLASSROOMS

A first step for educators to confront racism in schools is to realize that racism exists and that, if they are white, they have benefited from it. This is not an easy process as discussed earlier in the section on racial identity. We often resist discussion of race and racism because we must eventually confront our own feelings and beliefs. Once teachers believe that discrimination exists in society and the school, they are more likely to believe students of color when they report incidents of racism or discrimination. They stop making excuses for the perpetrators or explaining that the action of the perpetrator was not really racist.

Students often resist participating in discussions about race and racism. In predominantly white college classrooms, Tatum (1997) found three sources of resistance:

1. Race is considered a taboo topic for discussion, especially in racially mixed settings.
2. Many students, regardless of racial group membership, have been socialized to think of the United States as a just society.
3. Many students, particularly white students, initially deny any personal prejudice, recognizing the impact of racism on other people’s lives but failing to acknowledge its impact on their own.
CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN TEACHING

Racial Identification

Roosevelt High School annually celebrates Black History Month in February. The month-long study includes a convocation to celebrate African American heritage. For 10 years, students have organized and conducted this convocation in which the whole student body participates.

The students who have organized the event this year begin the convocation with the black national anthem. The African American students, a few other students, and some faculty members stand for the singing of the anthem. Many of the African American students become very angry with what they perceive to be a lack of respect by the students and faculty who do not stand.

In discussions that follow the convocation, some students and faculty who did not stand for the anthem argue that the only national anthem to which they should be expected to respond is their own national anthem. They say it is unfair to be required to attend a convocation celebrating the heritage of one racial group when there is no convocation to celebrate their own racial or ethnic heritage.

Questions for Discussion

1. What may have been happening in the school that led to the tensions that surfaced during this convocation?
2. How may the African American students perceive the refusal to stand by some of the students and faculty?
3. Do you think the reasons for not standing during the anthem are valid? Why or why not?
4. If you are meeting with a class immediately after the convocation, how will you handle the tension between students?
5. What activities might be initiated within the school to reduce the interracial tensions that have developed?

To answer these questions online, go to the Critical Incidents in Teaching module for this chapter of the Companion Website.

Many teachers do not feel comfortable handling students’ resistance to these topics, in part, because they are not always confident of their own stances on race. Because students are at different levels in their own racial identity, many of them can not address these issues as rationally as the teacher might desire. Some will personalize the discussion. Some will be emotional or confrontive. Others will be uncomfortable or silent. Just because the topic is difficult to address does not mean it should be ignored. Teachers should break the silence about race and develop the courage to work at eliminating racism in their own classrooms and schools. One step is to help students think critically about race and social justice for all students. How prevalent do you think racism is in your college and home community? How will you help white students understand racism and the privilege that it has given them?

Teachers should not ignore the racism that exists in the policies and practices of their schools. They should intervene when students call each other names that are racist. Students should be helped to understand that racist language and behavior are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in schools.
use derogatory terms for ethnic group members or tell ethnic jokes, teachers should use the opportunity to discuss attitudes about those groups. Students should not be allowed to express their hostility to other group members without being confronted by the teacher. When teachers allow students to treat others with disrespect, they are partners in the perpetuation of racism. These overt acts can be confronted and stopped, but the more difficult task will be to identify and eliminate racist practices in schools and by the educators who work in the schools.

A teacher’s challenge is to seriously confront these issues at a personal level before entering a classroom. If teachers believe that persons of color are intellectually inferior, they will find it difficult to have high expectations for the academic achievement of those students. We experience stages of racial identity as we learn to accept the existence of racism and to feel comfortable with our own racial identities. Although the developmental stages differ for members of oppressed and dominant groups because of their own lived encounters with racism and oppression (Cross, 1992), it is important that all educators seek opportunities to confront these issues in their own lives. Once in the classroom, they will be in the position to help students grapple with these topics and their own feelings. The goal should be to attack racism and oppression in daily life, rather than reinforce it in the classroom.

RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE CURRICULUM

School environments should help students learn to participate in the dominant society while maintaining connections to their distinct ethnicities if they choose. Respect for and support of ethnic differences will be essential in this effort. Students know when a teacher or counselor does not respect or value their ethnic backgrounds. As educators, we cannot afford to reject or neglect students because their ethnic backgrounds are different from our own. We are responsible for making sure all students learn to think, read, write, and compute so that they can function effectively in society. We can help accomplish this goal by accurately reflecting ethnicity in the curriculum and positively using it to teach and interact with students.

Traditionally, the curriculum of most schools has been centered in the dominant culture. The curriculum in most schools is based on the knowledge and perspective of the West (Northern and Western Europe). The inherent bias of the curriculum does not encourage candid admissions of racism and oppression within society. In fact, it supports the superiority of Western thought over all others and provides minimal or no introduction to the non-Western cultures of Asia, Africa, and South and Central America. Information on, and perspectives of, other groups are sometimes added as a unit during a school year. Some schools have replaced this traditional curriculum with one based on the culture of students and communities. Multicultural education, on the other hand, encourages a culturally responsive curriculum in which diversity is integrated throughout the courses, activities, and interactions in the classroom.

Ethnic Studies. Ethnic studies courses introduce students to the history and contemporary conditions of one or more ethnic groups. Many universities
CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN TEACHING

One Person, One Vote

Flint Ridge is a small K–12 private school in a suburb of a major city. The senior class has 47 members. Of that number, 3 are Asian American, 2 are Latino, 11 are African American, and the remainder are white. It is February, and plans are being made for the prom. The site has already been selected, and many details must now be determined. One of the most important decisions is who the disc jockey will be for the prom. Suggestions have been made about which DJ is to be hired. Opinions are strong and tend to be drawn along ethnic lines. The African American students want a popular African American DJ who plays music popular to that ethnic group. The white students want a white DJ who plays the type of music they prefer. The chair of the DJ Committee calls for a vote. Not surprisingly, all African American students vote for the black DJ. One Latino student votes with them. The other Latino student and the three Asian American students, however, vote with the white students for the white DJ.

"Twelve to thirty-five," announces the chair. "It’s Jerry Smith who will be our DJ for the prom."

"That’s not fair," says Tyson Edwards, the captain of the basketball team. "You guys always get your way because there are more of you than us."

"Not fair? What are you talking about?" says Keith Van Fleet, president of the senior class. "How much fairer can you get? It’s a democratic election. Everything in this school is done democratically. Every person gets a vote. Jerry Smith got the most votes, and everyone voted and every vote counted."

"You think you can ram everything down our throats just because you outnumber us," says Tyson. "We don’t have to listen to you. I’m leaving." As Tyson leaves, so do the other African American students.

The next day, Tyson asks to speak with Shelly Brooks, the senior class advisor. "I don’t mean any disrespect, Miss Brooks, but we don’t get any respect with the things that matter to black students. Everything is one person and one vote. We never have enough votes to get anything that we want as African Americans. We’ve decided to boycott the senior prom. We are going to have our own prom. We can’t really afford it, but our parents said that we are right, and they will help us hire a DJ who will play our kind of music. This is our last dance at this school, and for just once, we want to hear and dance to our kind of music."

Questions for Discussion

1. Is “one person, one vote” always the most democratic way of deciding issues?
2. Are the white students wrong in holding to the vote outcome?
3. Are the black students wrong in protesting so vehemently?
4. Are there similar parallel situations in the rest of society?
5. What compromises could be made that might be acceptable to both groups?

To answer these questions online, go to the Critical Incidents in Teaching module for this chapter of the Companion Website.
a specific ethnic group. Events that have been neglected in textbooks are addressed, myths are dispelled, and history is viewed from the perspective of the ethnic group, as well as the dominant group. Prospective teachers and other professional school personnel who have not been exposed to an examination of an ethnic group different from their own should take such a course or undertake individual study.

Traditionally, ethnic studies have been offered as separate courses that students elect from many offerings in the curriculum. Seldom have they been required courses for all students. The majority of students who choose these courses are students from the ethnic groups being studied. Although the information and experiences offered in these courses are important to these students, students from other ethnic groups also need to learn about others and the multiethnic nation and world in which they live. How have you learned about ethnic groups other than your own? What courses are offered in your college or university that would provide insights into another ethnic group? What groups discussed in this chapter do you know the least about?

Ethnocentric Curriculum. Historically, some immigrant groups have established their own schools, with classes often held in the evenings or on Saturdays, to reinforce their own cultural values, traditions, and the native language. Today other ethnic groups are establishing their own charter or private schools with curriculum that is centered around the history and values of their own ethnic group. Some Native American tribes have established tribal-controlled public schools in which the traditional culture serves as the social and intellectual starting point. Although most of these schools are located in rural Native American communities, some urban areas have created magnet Native American schools with similar goals.

Some African American communities have demanded an Afrocentric curriculum to challenge Eurocentrism and tell the truth about black history. They are designed to improve students’ self-esteem, academic skills, values, and positive identity with their ethnic group. At the core of this approach is an African perspective of the world and historical events. These schools are often in urban areas with large African American student populations. Afrocentric public schools are now found in Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Oakland, and Washington, DC.

Another development is the establishment of public school programs for African American male students. These programs are designed to assist African American males in overcoming the harsh realities they face—unemployment, drugs, violence, and poverty. Programs provide a strong gender and cultural identity to assist young men in becoming successful in their academic, occupational, and community pursuits. The programs use strong, positive role models as teachers and focus on an Afrocentric curriculum. The goals are laudable. Such programs may play a role in protecting young African American males against forces that lead to their being murdered, arrested, or unemployed in disproportionate numbers.

Some parents, educators, and community activists who believed that the public schools were not effectively serving their children have established urban, ethnocentric, and grassroots charter schools. Many of these schools have
placed the ethnic culture of the enrolled students at the center of the curriculum; they are Afrocentric, Chicano-centric, or Native American-centric, emphasizing what is known, valued, and respected from their own cultural roots. Although a number of these schools have been established within the public system, the schools often do not have the financial support that charter school parents in the suburbs are able to generate. They face the same inequities of other public schools in their communities. Why do some parents find that the traditional curriculum does not reflect their culture? Why do they think an ethnocentric curriculum would serve their children better? What information would you need to teach in an ethnocentric school?

**Multiethnic Curriculum.** A multiethnic curriculum permeates all subject areas at all levels of education, from preschool through adult education. All courses reflect accurate and positive references to ethnic diversity. The amount of specific content about ethnic groups varies according to the course taught, but an awareness and a recognition of the multiethnic population is reflected in all classroom experiences. No matter how assimilated students in a classroom are, it is the teacher’s responsibility to expose them to the ethnic diversity of this nation and the world.

Bulletin boards, resource books, and films that show ethnic diversity should constantly reinforce these realities, although teachers should not depend entirely on these resources for instructional content about groups. Too often, persons of color are studied only during a unit on African American history or Native Americans. Too often, they are not included on reading lists or in the study of biographies, labor unions, or the environment. Students can finish school without reading or seeing anything written or produced by females and males of color. If ethnic groups are included only during a unit or a week focusing on a particular group, students do not learn to view them as an integral part of society. They are viewed as separate, distinct, and inferior to the dominant group. A multiethnic curriculum prevents the distortion of history and contemporary conditions. Without it, the perspective of the dominant group becomes the only valid curriculum to which students are exposed.

**EXPLORE DIVERSITY:** To observe a teacher integrating ethnicity into a literacy lesson for second graders, visit the 2nd Grade Literacy case on the CD, *Exploring Diversity* located in the accompanying booklet.

An educator has the responsibility for ensuring that ethnic groups become an integral part of the total curriculum. This mandate does not require the teacher to discuss every ethnic group. It does require that the classroom resources and instruction not focus solely on the dominant group. It requires that perspectives of ethnic groups and the dominant group be examined in discussions of historical and current events. For example, one should consider the perspectives of Mexican and Native Americans as well as the dominant group in a presentation and discussion of the westward movement of European Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It requires students to read literature by authors from different ethnic backgrounds. It expects that mathematics and
science be explored from a Native American as well as a Western perspective. The contributions of different ethnic groups are reflected in the books that are used by students, in the movies that they view, and in the activities in which they participate.

Multiethnic education should include learning experiences to help students examine their own stereotypes about and prejudice against ethnic groups. These are not easy topics to address but should be a part of the curriculum beginning in preschool. At all levels, but particularly in junior high and secondary classrooms, students may resist discussion of these issues. Teachers can create a safe classroom climate by establishing clear guidelines for such discussions. What information about ethnic diversity could be integrated into the subject that you are planning to teach? How have the bulletin boards and display cases in the schools you have visited reflected ethnic diversity? What groups are usually included?

Development of a multiethnic curriculum requires the educator to evaluate textbooks and classroom resources for ethnic content and biases. Although advances have been made in eliminating ethnic biases and adding information about ethnic groups in textbooks, many older textbooks are still used in classrooms. With many textbook revisions, ethnic content has been added to what already existed, rather than being carefully integrated throughout the text. Biased books should not prevent the teacher from providing multiethnic instruction.

Supplementary materials can fill the gap in this area. The biases and omissions in the texts can be used for discussions of the experiences of ethnic groups. None of these instructional activities will occur, however, unless the teacher is aware of and values ethnic differences and their importance in the curriculum.

CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

After working with African American students in schools for many years, Professor Janice Hale (2001) has concluded that “inferior educational outcomes are tolerated for African American children day in and day out, in inner-city, suburban, and private school settings” (p. 70). The data on student achievement supports Hale’s conclusion. African American students, as well as Latino and Native American students, are not meeting standards as measured on the standardized tests required in most states. As a result, a disproportionately large number of students of color are not being promoted to the next grade, not graduating from high school, and dropping out of schools. Why do educators allow so many students to fail? How can educators ensure that all students are meeting standards? What is the negative impact of standardized testing on students of color?

The Role of Assessment. Schools conduct widespread testing of students to determine if they are meeting the standards established by states. Tests are trumpeted as measures of competence to move from one grade to another, graduate from high school, enter upper-division college courses, earn a baccalaureate, and become licensed to teach. Overwhelmingly, promoters suggest that anyone who cannot pass the appropriate test certainly cannot be
Testing is a mainstay of school culture today as students are required to meet standards as measured by their performance on standardized state tests. Qualified to move on to further study. Thus, student performance on state tests has become the primary measure of quality in the nation’s schools with sanctions if students are not making adequate yearly progress (AYP) or the minimum level of student performance required by the federal legislation, “No Child Left Behind.” Teachers and principals are sometimes in jeopardy of losing their jobs if students do not perform at expected levels. Unfortunately, many teachers are teaching to the test, which limits their teaching of a number of subjects that are not tested and helping students develop critical thinking skills.

Standardized tests have limited the access of many students from low-income and oppressed ethnic groups to more rigorous study at all educational levels and may prevent students from entering professional schools. Testing has led to the assignment of disproportionately large numbers of these students to special education programs for the mentally retarded, learning disabled, and emotionally disturbed.

Between 1970 and 1990, student performance on national tests improved, with the largest gains being made by students of color (Education Trust, 2003). The progress came to a halt in the 1990s, and the achievement gap between whites and most students of color remains wide. Why do students from oppressed groups score lower than dominant group members on standardized tests? It is not, as the authors of The Bell Curve (Hernstein & Murray, 1994) claim, due to genetic differences of intelligence between the races. Education Watch State and National Data, 2004 (Education Trust, 2004) reports the following disparities between groups:

- Low-income and students of color are more likely to be taught a low-level curriculum with low standards for performance.
About 62 out of every 100 white students complete Algebra II. Only 52% of African Americans and 45% of Latinos take this course; the pattern is similar for chemistry.

African American and Latino high school graduates are much less likely than whites and Asian Americans to go to college.

Students of color have more unqualified and inexperienced teachers.

More mathematics courses in high schools with large numbers of students of color are taught by teachers lacking a major in mathematics.

Should it be a surprise that many students of color do not perform as well as white students when they have not taken advanced mathematics and science courses or had teachers who majored in those subjects? In urban schools in which students of color are overrepresented, teachers are less likely to be fully licensed than in schools with middle-class white students. Advanced courses in mathematics and science are not always available in the schools attended by a large number of students of color. Students must have access to such courses and qualified teachers to study the content on which they will be tested.

As educators, we must be careful not to label students of color intellectually inferior because their standardized test scores are low. These scores too often influence a teacher's expectations for the academic performance of students in the classroom. It is essential that educators maintain high expectations for all students, regardless of test scores. Standardized test scores can help in determining how assimilated into the dominant culture and how affluent one's family may be, but they provide less evidence of how intelligent a person is. Many other factors can be used to provide information about intelligence—for example, the ability to think and respond appropriately in different situations.

What should the purposes of assessments be? Rather than use tests to sort students on the basis of income, ethnicity, and family characteristics, assessments could be used to help understand what students know so that curriculum and activities can be designed to increase their knowledge and skills. Tests should provide information that will help improve student learning. The traditional multiple-choice tests are beginning to be replaced by performance assessments. These assessments use observations, portfolios, projects, and essays for students to demonstrate what they know in many different ways. They are designed to promote complex and engaged learning.

Educators are capable of making valid decisions about ability on the basis of numerous objective and subjective factors about students. If decisions about the capabilities of students of color match exactly the standardized scores, the educator should reevaluate his or her own responses and interactions with these students. This is an area that none of us can afford to neglect. Testing results today are making differences in the life chances for many students, especially those of color and from low-income families.

**Who Is Responsible for Closing the Gaps?** When students do not achieve at levels expected, too many teachers do not take responsibility for helping students learn. They blame the students, their parents, or the economic conditions of the community rather than seriously reflecting on why students in their classroom
are not learning. A number of research studies are finding that teacher effectiveness is more important in student achievement than a student’s race, poverty, or parent’s education (Carey, 2004; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). In other words, effective teachers matter. Students who have been assigned the most effective teachers for three years in a row perform at much higher levels than the students who were in the classrooms of the least effective teachers for three years. With effective teachers, low-achieving students become high achievers (Education Trust, 2003). The problem is that low-achieving students are more likely to be assigned ineffective teachers.

Many teachers do not allow students to fail. There are many examples of good teachers who have helped students with low test scores achieve at advanced levels. African American and Latino students have performed at the same level as other students in mathematics and other subjects after teachers raised their expectations and changed their teaching strategies. Project SEED, the Algebra Project, and the Marcus Garvey School in Los Angeles are examples of programs that are successful in ensuring that African American students achieve at high levels (Hilliard, 2003). The Education Trust (2003) has identified a number of schools that are ensuring that their students of color are achieving at high levels. Those schools

1. have clear goals based on standards and benchmarks;
2. provide all students challenging curriculum aligned with standards;
3. provide extra instruction to students when they need it; and
4. know that good teaching matters more than anything else. (p. 2)

Students are not always inactive participants in their academic achievement. They are not always engaged with the schoolwork. They do not always do their homework. Some researchers have found that many working-class boys and students of color develop resistance or oppositional patterns to handle their subordination status within schools (Ogbu, 2003; Solomon, 1988; Willis, 1977). These patterns often take the form of breaking school rules and norms, belittling academic achievement, and valuing manual over mental work. These students may equate schooling with acting white or middle class. Although middle-class African American students perform academically better than their working-class peers, they do not do as well as white students, which some researchers attribute to this oppositional process.

An oppositional identity is accompanied by attitudes and behaviors that are clearly opposed to those of the dominant group (Ogbu, 2003). Some African American, Mexican American, and Native American students equate schooling with acceptance of the culture of the dominant group over their own cultural identity. Some students resist assimilation by developing strategies of resistance, including poor academic achievement (Fordham, 1988; Gibson, 1988; Ogbu, 2003).

Not all students of color adopt an oppositional form, and not all groups are equally affected. As a group, Asian American students have high achievement records in mathematics and science and attend college at rates disproportionately higher than other groups. One explanation is that Asian American adults are overrepresented in professional occupations, which results in incomes above
that of most other groups of color. The economic advantages in the home backgrounds of many of these students contribute to their high levels of achievement and participation in mathematics and science. Generally, the cultural group values mathematics and science skills, and families provide experiences that encourage their development.

Many immigrants are less likely to develop the oppositional forms of the long-established groups of color. Students are more willing to accept school norms and succeed academically, in part because they compare the conditions of living in the United States with those in the country they just left. They are motivated to learn and, as a result, expend the necessary effort to learn. However, long-term studies of immigrants find that the longer a child of immigrants lives in the United States, the more their academic engagement and achievement approaches the general student population (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Educators cannot expect that the cultural experiences of all immigrant students will be congruent with the norms of school. An important contributing factor is the status of the immigrant—whether the families are legal immigrants, refugees, migrant workers, or undocumented workers without legal papers (Gibson, 1992/1993). School achievement is dependent on many factors: how long the family has been in the country, the student’s age on arrival, the parents’ education and economic status in the country of origin, exposure to Western and urban lifestyles, languages spoken in the family, quality of educational experiences before immigrating, and others. It will be important for educators to interact with immigrant families to determine the most effective instructional strategies for ensuring academic achievement.

Students who develop an oppositional identity do not see themselves or their cultures valued in their classrooms and schools. They see few students who look like them in advanced placement classes. They may have few adult role models whose education has led to success and acceptance in dominant society. They may have few teachers of color who have a similar cultural background that allows them to interact and communicate using the same cultural cues. Their teachers often have low expectations for their academic success. Their teachers too often have not majored in the subject they are teaching. Is it any wonder that many students of color are failing? An effective teacher can overcome these obstacles. Are you willing to accept the challenge to ensure that all of the students in your classroom meet high standards?

DESEGREGATION AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS

Although it has been over 50 years since the Brown decision, the nation’s schools are now becoming resegregated. The most integrated schools today are in rural and small town areas. The most segregated schools are located in central cities of large metropolitan areas and the suburban rings closest to cities. Segregated schools for students of color usually serve impoverished communities, and, as before 1954, are most often providing unequal educational opportunities to their clientele. Charter and private schools tend to be even more segregated than public schools. This segregation guarantees that most white students have
little contact with students of color except in the South and Southwest (Orfield & Lee, 2004).

The emphasis on equal educational opportunity has moved from ensuring that students in a school represent different racial groups to demanding quality education across schools. Courts are beginning to expect states to equalize educational outcomes for all students (Carroll, Fulton, Abercrombie, & Yoon, 2004). The courts continue to hear cases alleging unequal resources for the education of students of color. In a letter to the states, the former U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley, expressed his concern about these inequities:

I am concerned about long standing racial and ethnic disparities in the distribution of education resources, including gaps in access to experienced and qualified teachers, adequate facilities, and instructional programs and support, including technology, as well as gaps in the funding necessary to secure these resources . . . These resource gaps are likely to be particularly acute in high-poverty schools, including urban schools, where many students of color are isolated and where the effect of the resource gaps may be cumulative. In other words, students who need the most may often receive the least, and these students often are students of color. (Riley, 2004, p. 36)

Many middle-class families are very involved in their children’s schools, ensuring that they are staffed by highly qualified teachers and offer a challenging curriculum. The problem is that they tend not to be so concerned about the quality of education for other people’s children, particularly the children of parents with whom they never interact. In some communities, parents in upper-middle-class schools are demanding that the money they raise in their fund-raising activities be used in their school and not shared with other schools in the district, even though some of the other schools may be in dire need of additional resources.

While schools are becoming more segregated, the courts are acknowledging the importance of diverse student populations in educational settings. In the most recent affirmative action case regarding the practices at the University of Michigan (Grutter v. Bollinger, 2003), Justice Sandra Day O’Conner said in the majority opinion that “Numerous studies show that student body diversity promotes learning outcomes, and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society, and better prepares them as professionals” (p. 8). Although this case and other affirmative action cases have addressed colleges and universities, officials in elementary and secondary schools take their cues from them as they decide when it is appropriate to use race to assign students to schools and promote the integration of their schools.

Another outgrowth of Brown v. Board of Education was the need for intergroup relations to assist students and teachers in respecting each other and working together effectively. This need continues today. Even within desegregated schools, students are often segregated in classes, the cafeteria, and activities. In a survey of students, Williams (2003) found that schools contributed to placing people into categories. One third of the students said it was hard to make friends with students in other groups. Forty percent of the students said that their group had rejected someone from another group. To ensure that students interact with students from other ethnic and racial groups, educators have to consciously plan for this outcome. A number of national groups have developed programs
When students of different ethnic groups have the opportunity to develop interpersonal relationships, racial and ethnic relations are likely to be improved.

to encourage cross-cultural communications. The Southern Poverty Law Center’s project, Mix It Up at Lunch, for example, challenges schools to mix students from different groups during the lunch hour. More than 3,000 schools are now participating in the project, which is described at [http://www.mixitup.org](http://www.mixitup.org).

Small-group teams and cooperative learning should promote both learning and interracial friendships. Educators should be engaging parents in school activities and decision making to decrease the dissonance between school and home. Students from different groups should have equal access to the curriculum, advanced courses, qualified teachers, and activities to develop high-order thinking skills. They should see themselves in the curriculum and in textbooks. Practices such as tracking and pull-out programs are barriers to providing equal access and improving intergroup relations. Multicultural education is a critical component in the continued effort to desegregate schools and improve intergroup relations.

**Summary**

Almost from the beginning of European settlement, the population of the United States has been multiethnic, with individuals representing many Native American and European nations, later to be joined by Africans, Latinos, and Asians. Primary reasons for immigration were internal economic impoverish-
ment and political repression in the countries of origin and the demands of a vigorous U.S. economy that required a large labor force. The conditions encountered by different ethnic groups, the reasons they came, and their expectations about life here differed greatly and have led ethnic groups to view themselves as distinct from each other.

Persons of color have had to fight for their civil rights throughout U.S. history. During the 1950s and 1960s African Americans were successful in removing Jim Crow laws that allowed states to segregate public schools and accommodations. Their efforts led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1968 Voting Rights Act and spawned civil rights actions for women, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and persons with disabilities.

Ethnicity is a sense of peoplehood based on national origin. Although no longer useful in describing groups of people, the term race continues to be used in this country to classify groups of people as inferior or superior. Its popular usage is based on society’s perception that racial differences are important—a belief not upheld by scientific study. Members of oppressed groups experience discriminatory treatment and often are relegated to relatively low-status positions in society.

The school curriculum has traditionally represented the dominant culture as the focus of study. Since the 1970s, ethnic studies have been added to curricula as an extension or special segment that focuses on the in-depth study of the history and contemporary conditions of one or more ethnic groups. Some ethnic groups have established schools, or programs in traditional schools, that center the curriculum on their ethnicity. Afrocentric and Native American schools are examples of ethnocentric curriculum approaches. An integrated approach is broader in scope in that it requires ethnic content to permeate the total curriculum; thus, all courses taught reflect the multiethnic nature of society. Understanding ethnicity is an advantage in developing effective teaching strategies for individual students.

Educators should examine how they are administering and using standardized tests in the classroom. Too often, testing programs have been used for the purpose of identifying native intelligence and thus sorting people for education and jobs. If disproportionately large numbers of students of color are scoring poorly on such tests and being placed in special classes as a result, the program must be reviewed. Many factors can be used to provide information about intelligence and ability—for example, the ability to think and respond appropriately in different situations.

Desegregation is a process for decreasing racial/ethnic isolation in schools. Although early desegregation efforts focused on ensuring that black and white students attended the same schools, increasing numbers of students attend predominantly minority schools. The emphasis is on ensuring the academic achievement of all students and eliminating the inequities in educational opportunities. Intergroup activities in schools help students develop cross-cultural communications skills, thus getting to know students from different ethnic and racial groups.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is membership in an ethnic group more important to some individuals than to others?
2. What factors cause members of oppressed groups to view ethnicity differently from dominant group members?

3. How different and similar were the immigration patterns of Africans, Asians, Central Americans, Europeans, and South Americans during the past four centuries?

4. Why have the changes made during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s not eliminated the income and educational gaps between groups?

5. Why does race remain such an important factor in the social, political, and economic patterns of the United States?

6. What characteristics might an educator look for to determine a student’s ethnic background and the importance it plays in that student’s life?

7. How would you use the ethnicity and race of your students to teach a lesson in the subject that you are planning to teach?

8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the following approaches: ethnic studies, ethnocentric education, and integration of ethnic content?

9. Why is the use of standardized tests so controversial? What are the dangers of depending too heavily on the results of standardized tests?

10. Why do school officials seek teachers who believe that all students can learn?

**PORTFOLIO ACTIVITIES**

1. Develop a lesson that reflects an integrative approach to incorporating multiethnic content. The lesson should be for the subject and level (for example, elementary or secondary) that you plan to teach. (INTASC Standard 3)

2. As you observe schools, record practices in classrooms, the halls, the cafeteria, extracurricular activities, and the main office that might be perceived as racist by persons of color. Write a paper for your portfolio that describes these practices and why they could be considered racist. (INTASC Standard 3)

3. Analyze the performance of students on required standardized scores in one or more of the schools you are observing. Discuss the results based on the race or ethnicity of students in the school and indicate your conclusions. (Note: Schools are required by the federal legislation, “No Child Left Behind,” to disaggregate data by race and ethnicity.) (INTASC Standard 8)

**ONLINE ACTIVITIES** For additional questions and activities linked to the Exploring Diversity CD, and additional chapter exercises, visit this text’s Companion Website at www.prenhall.com/gollnick.
SUGGESTED READINGS


This personal chronicle of the author’s struggle to identify his ethnicity and race when they do not fit society’s categories provides insights into institutionalized notions of race, culture, ethnicity, and class.


This book calls for a replacement of the murky legends of Columbus with a more honest sense of who we are and why we are here. It also discusses the courageous struggles and lasting wisdom of indigenous peoples.


This pamphlet provides recommendations for helping primary-age students and their parents understand ethnic, race, gender, and disability biases.


Eight exemplary teachers of African American students and their approaches to teaching are portrayed. The teachers differ in racial background, personal styles, and methods but affirm and strengthen cultural diversity in their classrooms.


This interdisciplinary guide for educators, students, and parents includes lessons and readings on racism, transforming the curriculum, tracking, parent/school relations, and language policies.


Civil rights leader Robert Moses has transformed the grassroots organizing of parents, teachers, and students into a program that successfully teaches algebra to middle-school students. Building on the civil rights movement in the South, the authors describe the Algebra Project, which has helped students of color create a culture of literacy around algebra.


This compilation of work by Native parents, educators, poets, and writers is an excellent resource for educators interested in nonbiased material about indigenous people.


This book provides an understanding of the richness and beauty of our multicultural society. It encourages parents and children to discuss the value of diversity and the hurtfulness of hate.


The history of America is retold from the voices of Native Americans, African Americans, Jews, Irish Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and others. It covers the period from the colonization of the New World to the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

Teaching Tolerance. (Published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104)

This semiannual magazine provides teachers with resources and ideas to promote harmony in the classroom. Articles are written from the perspectives of multiple ethnic groups. It is available at no cost to teachers.


These guidelines should help educators in responding promptly and effectively to incidents of bias in schools.

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