Chapter 4 describes curriculum transformation and why it is needed to help students understand the United States and the world from diverse cultural and ethnic perspectives. This chapter describes how knowledge is constructed and how it reflects the biographical journeys, cultures, perspectives, and values of the historians, social scientists, and educators who construct it. This chapter also describes five types of knowledge and maintains that students should learn each type, as well as how knowledge is influenced by its creators. Students should also learn how to construct knowledge themselves and how their own values, perspectives, and biographical journeys influence the knowledge they construct.

**An Epistemological Journey**

I was an elementary school student in the Arkansas Delta in the 1950s. One of my most powerful memories is the image of the happy and loyal slaves in my social studies textbooks. I also remember that there were three other Blacks in my textbooks: Booker T. Washington, the educator; George Washington Carver, the scientist; and Marian Anderson, the contralto. I had several persistent questions throughout my school days: Why were the slaves pictured as happy? Were there other Blacks in history beside the two Washingtons and Anderson? Who created this image of slaves? Why? The image of the happy slaves was inconsistent with everything I knew about the African American descendants of enslaved people in my segregated community. We had to drink water from fountains labeled “colored,” and we could not use the city’s public library.
However, we were not happy about either of these legal requirements. In fact, we resisted these laws in powerful but subtle ways each day. As children, we savored the taste of “White water” when the authorities were preoccupied with more serious infractions against the racial caste system.

Throughout my schooling, these questions remained cogent as I tried to reconcile the representations of African Americans in textbooks with the people I knew in my family and community. I wanted to know why these images were highly divergent. My undergraduate curriculum did not help answer my questions. I read one essay by a person of color during my four years in college, “Stranger in the Village,” by James Baldwin (1953/1985b). In this powerful essay, Baldwin describes how he was treated as the “Other” in a Swiss village. He was hurt and disappointed—not happy—about his treatment.

My epistemological quest to find out why the slaves were represented as happy became a lifelong journey that continues, and the closer I think I am to the answer, the more difficult and complex both my question and the answers become. The question—Why were the slaves represented as happy?—has taken different forms in various periods of my life. I have lived with these questions all of my professional life.

I now believe that the biographical journeys of researchers greatly influence their values, their research questions, and the knowledge they construct. The knowledge they construct mirrors their life experiences and values. The happy slaves in my school textbooks were invented by the Southern historian Ulrich B. Phillips (1918/1966). The images of enslaved people he constructed reflected his belief in the inferiority of African Americans and his socialization in Georgia near the turn of the century (Smith & Inscoe, 1993).

The Values of Researchers

Social scientists are human beings who have both minds and hearts. However, their minds and the products of their minds have dominated research discourse in history and the social sciences. The hearts of social scientists exercise a cogent influence on research questions, findings, concepts, generalizations, and theories. I am using “heart” as a metaphor for values, which are the beliefs, commitments, and generalized principles to which social scientists have strong attachments and commitments. The value dimensions of social science research was largely muted and silenced in the academic community and within the popular culture until the neutrality of the social sciences was strongly challenged by the postmodern, women’s studies, and ethnic studies movements of the 1960s and 1970s (King, 2004; Ladner, 1973).
Social science research has supported historically and still supports educational policies that affect the life chances and educational opportunities of students. The educational policies upheld by mainstream social science and educational researchers have often harmed low-income students and students of color. However, the values of social scientists are complex within diverse nations such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Social science and educational research over time and often within the same period have both reinforced inequality (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994) and supported liberation and human betterment (Clark, 1965).

In my American Educational Research Association (AERA) presidential address (Banks, 1998), I describe research that supports these claims:

- The cultural communities in which individuals are socialized are also epistemological communities that have shared beliefs, perspectives, and knowledge.
- Social science and historical research are influenced in complex ways by the life experiences, values, personal biographies, and epistemological communities of researchers.
- Knowledge created by social scientists, historians, and public intellectuals reflects and perpetuates their epistemological communities, experiences, goals, and interests.
- How individual social scientists interpret their cultural experiences is mediated by the interaction of a complex set of status variables, such as gender, social class, age, political affiliation, religion, and region. (p. 5)

Valuation and Knowledge Construction

In nations around the world, the assimilationist ideology has been the dominant historical force since the age of colonization and the expansion of Western nations into the Americas, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and Australia. The assimilationist ideology maintains that in order to construct a cohesive nation and civic culture individuals from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups must surrender their home and community cultures and acquire those of the dominant and mainstream groups (Patterson, 1977; Schlesinger, 1991). Assimilationists believe that ethnic attachments prevent individuals from developing commitments and allegiance to the national civic culture (see Kymlicka, 2004, for a critique of this view).

The assimilationist ideology was seriously challenged by the ethnic revitalization and protest movements of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.
These movements began with and were stimulated by the Black civil rights movement in the United States (Painter, 2006). Multiculturalism and multicultural education grew out of these movements. Multiculturalism challenges and questions the assimilationist ideology and argues that ethnic and cultural diversity enriches the mainstream culture, that the identities of individuals are “multiple, nested, and overlapping” (Kymlicka, 2004 p. xiv), and that individuals who are firmly rooted in their home and community cultures are more—not less—capable of being effective citizens of the nation-state and cosmopolitan citizens of the world community (Appiah, 2006).

The Debate Between the Assimilationists and Multiculturalists

Neoliberal and political conservatives—who are also strong assimilationists—claim that multiculturalism is detrimental to the nation-state and the civic community (Bawer, 2012; Patterson, 1977; Schlesinger, 1991). Multiculturalists maintain that civic equality, recognition (Gutmann, 2004), and structural inclusion into the nation-state are essential for citizens from diverse groups to acquire allegiance to the nation-state and to become effective participants in the civic community (Banks, 2007; Kymlicka, 2004).

I hope to make a scholarly contribution to the debate between the assimilationists and the multiculturalists in this chapter by providing evidence for the claim that the positions of both groups reflect values, ideologies, political positions, and human interests. Each position also implies a kind of knowledge that should be taught in the schools, colleges, and universities, and in public sites such as museums, theaters, films, and other visual media. I will describe a typology of the kinds of knowledge that exist in society and in educational institutions. This typology is designed to help practicing educators, researchers, and cultural workers identify types of knowledge that reflect specific values, assumptions, perspectives, and ideological positions.

Educators and cultural workers should help students to understand all types of knowledge. Students should be involved in the debates about knowledge construction and conflicting interpretations, such as the extent to which Egypt and Phoenicia influenced Greek civilization (Bernal, 1987/1991). Students should also be taught how to construct their own interpretations of the past and present, as well as how to identify their own positions, interests, ideologies, and assumptions. Students should become critical thinkers who have the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and commitments needed to participate in democratic action to
help their nation and the world close the gap between ideals and realities. Multicultural education is an education for functioning effectively in a pluralistic democratic society. Helping students to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to participate in reflective civic action is one of its major goals (Banks, 2007).

The philosophical position that underlies this chapter is within the transformative tradition in ethnic studies and multicultural education (Banks, 1996). This tradition links knowledge, social commitment, and action (Meier & Rudwick, 1986). A transformative, action-oriented education can best be implemented when students examine different types of knowledge, freely examine their perspectives and moral commitments, and experience democracy in schools (Dewey, 1959) and in public sites such as museums, theaters, and historical monuments (Loewen, 1999).

**The Characteristics of Knowledge**

I define knowledge as the way an individual explains or interprets reality. I conceptualize knowledge broadly, and use it the way it is utilized in the sociology of knowledge literature to include ideas, values, and interpretations (Farganis, 1986). As postmodern theorists have pointed out, knowledge is socially constructed and reflects human interests, values, and action (Code, 1991; Foucault, 1972; Harding, 1991; Kerdeman, 2012). Knowledge is also a product of human interactions (Nejadmehr, 2009). Although many complex factors influence the knowledge that is created by an individual or group—including the actuality of what occurred and the interactions that knowledge constructors have with other people—the knowledge that people create is heavily influenced by their interpretations of their experiences and their positions within particular social, economic, and political systems and structures of society.

In the Western empirical tradition, the ideal within each academic discipline is the formation of knowledge without the influence of the researcher’s personal or cultural characteristics (Greer, 1969; Kaplan, 1964). However, as critical and postmodern theorists have pointed out, personal, cultural, and social factors influence the formulation of knowledge even when objective knowledge is the ideal within a discipline (Foucault, 1972; Habermas, 1971). Researchers are frequently unaware of how their personal experiences and positions within society influence the knowledge they produce. Most mainstream historians were unaware of how their regional and cultural biases influenced their interpretation of the Reconstruction period of U.S. history until W. E. B. DuBois (1935/1962) published a study that challenged the accepted and established interpretations of that historical period.
**Positionality and Knowledge Construction**

Positionality is a significant concept that emerged out of feminist scholarship; this term describes how important aspects of identity such as gender, race, social class, age, religion, and sexual orientation influence the knowledge that scholars construct (Tetreault, 2013). Positionality reveals the importance of identifying the positions and frames of reference from which scholars and writers present their data, interpretations, and analyses (Anzaldúa, 1999). The need for researchers and scholars to identify their ideological positions and the normative assumptions in their work—an inherent part of feminist and ethnic studies scholarship—contrasts with the empirical paradigm that has dominated Western science (Code, 1991; Harding, 1991, 2012).

The assumption in the Western empirical paradigm is that the knowledge produced within it is neutral and objective and that its principles are universal. The effects of values, frames of references, and the normative positions of researchers and scholars are infrequently discussed within the traditional empirical paradigm that has dominated scholarship and teaching in colleges and universities in the West since the early 20th century. However, scholars such as the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal (1944) and the American psychologist Kenneth B. Clark (1965)—prior to the feminist, ethnic studies, and postmodern movements—wrote about the need for scholars to recognize and state their normative positions and valuations and to become, in the apt words of Clark, “involved observers.” Myrdal stated that valuations are not just attached to research but permeate it. He wrote,

> There is no device for excluding biases in social sciences than to face the valuations and to introduce them as explicitly stated, specific, and sufficiently concretized value premises. (p. 1043; emphasis in original)

**A Knowledge Typology**

A description of the major types of knowledge can help educators and cultural workers to identify perspectives and content needed to make education multicultural and culturally responsive (Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2010). Each of the types of knowledge described below reflects specific purposes, perspectives, experiences, goals, and human interests. Teaching students various types of knowledge can help them to better understand the perspectives of different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups as well as to develop their own versions and interpretations of issues and events. Different types of knowledge also help students to gain more
comprehensive and accurate conceptions of reality. Multiple perspectives and different types of knowledge enable knowers to construct knowledge that is closer approximations to the actuality of what occurred than single perspectives. In an important and influential essay, Merton (1972) maintains that the perspectives of both “insiders” and “outsiders” are needed to enable social scientists to gain a comprehensive view of social reality.

I identify and describe five types of knowledge (see Figure 5.1): (1) personal/cultural knowledge; (2) popular knowledge; (3) mainstream academic knowledge; (4) transformative academic knowledge; and (5) pedagogical knowledge. This is an ideal-type typology in the Weberian sense. The German sociologist Max Weber pioneered the idea of using typologies to classify social phenomenon. His typology of three forms of authority—traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic—is an example (Henry, n.d.). The five categories of my knowledge typology, like the categories in Weber's typology, approximate but do not describe reality in its total complexity. The categories are useful conceptual tools for thinking about knowledge and planning multicultural teaching and learning. Although the categories can be conceptually distinguished, in reality they overlap and are interrelated in a dynamic way.

Since the 1960s, some of the findings and insights from transformative academic knowledge have been incorporated into mainstream academic knowledge and scholarship. Traditionally, students were taught in

**FIGURE 5.1 Types of Knowledge and How They Are Interrelated**
U.S. schools and universities that the land that became North America was a thinly populated wilderness when the Europeans arrived in the 16th century and that African Americans made few contributions to the development of American civilization (mainstream academic knowledge). Some of the findings from transformative academic knowledge that challenged these conceptions have influenced mainstream academic scholarship and have been incorporated into mainstream college, university, and school textbooks (Hu-DeHart, 2012; Snipp, 2012). Consequently, the relationship between the five categories of knowledge is dynamic and interactive rather than static.

**The Types of Knowledge**

**Personal and Cultural Knowledge**

The concepts, explanations, and interpretations that students derive from personal experiences in their homes, families, and community cultures constitute personal and cultural knowledge. The assumptions, perspectives, and insights that students derive from their experiences in their homes and community cultures are used as screens to view and interpret the knowledge and experiences they encounter in school and in other institutions and sites within the larger society, such as museums and the media.

Research and theory by Fordham and Ogbu (1986) indicate that low-income African American students often experience academic difficulties in school because of the ways that cultural knowledge within their community conflicts with pedagogical knowledge and with school norms and expectations. Fordham and Ogbu also state that the culture of many low-income African American students is oppositional to school culture. These students believe that if they master the knowledge taught in the schools they will violate fictive kinship norms and run the risk of “acting White.” Fordham (1988, 1991) has suggested that African American students who become high academic achievers resolve the conflict caused by the interaction of their personal cultural knowledge with the knowledge and norms within the schools by becoming “raceless” or by “ad hocing a culture.”

Personal and cultural knowledge is problematic when it conflicts with scientific ways of validating knowledge, is oppositional to the culture of the school, or challenges the main tenets and assumptions of mainstream academic knowledge. Much of the knowledge about outgroups that students learn from their home and community cultures consists of misconceptions, stereotypes, and inaccurate information (Aboud, 2009). Many students around the world are socialized within
communities that are segregated along racial, ethnic, and social-class lines (Banks, 2009a). These youths have few opportunities to learn first-hand about the cultures of people from different racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and social-class groups.

The challenge for educators is to make effective instructional use of the personal and cultural knowledge of students while at the same time helping them to reach beyond their cultural boundaries (Lee, 2007; Moll & Spear-Ellinwood, 2012). Educational institutions should recognize, validate, and make effective use of student personal and cultural knowledge. However, an important goal of education is to free students from their cultural and ethnic boundaries and enable them to cross cultural borders freely (Banks, 2007).

In the past, the school and other educational institutions have paid little attention to the personal and cultural knowledge of students and have taught them mainly popular and mainstream knowledge. It is important for teachers and cultural workers to be aware of the personal and cultural knowledge of students when designing educational experiences for students from diverse groups. Educators can use student personal cultural knowledge to motivate them and as a foundation and scaffold for teaching other types of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

**Popular Knowledge**

Popular knowledge consists of the facts, interpretations, and beliefs that are institutionalized within television, movies, videos, DVDs, CDs, and other forms of mass media. Many of the tenets of popular knowledge are conveyed in subtle rather than explicit ways (Cortés, 2012). These statements are examples of significant themes in U.S. popular knowledge: (1) The United States is a powerful nation with unlimited opportunities for individuals who are willing to take advantage of them. (2) To succeed in the United States, an individual only has to work hard. You can realize your dreams in the United States if you are willing to work hard and pull yourself up by the bootstraps. (3) As a land of opportunity for all, the United States is a highly cohesive nation, whose ideals of equality and freedom are shared by all.

Most of the major tenets of American popular culture are widely shared and are deeply entrenched in U.S. society. However, they are rarely explicitly articulated. Rather, they are presented in the media, in museums (Sherman, 2008), historical sites (Loewen, 1999), and in other sources in the forms of stories, anecdotes, news stories, and interpretations of current events (Cortés, 2012). In his engaging and informative book, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong*, Loewen describes how historical sites in the U.S. perpetuate and reinforce popular myths about American heroes, events, and exceptionalism.
Commercial entertainment films both reflect and perpetuate popular knowledge (Shohat & Stam, 1994). While preparing to write this chapter I viewed *How the West Was Won*, a popular and influential film that was directed by John Ford and released by MGM in 1962. I selected this film for review because the settlement of the West is a major theme in American culture and society about which there are many popular images, beliefs, myths, and misconceptions. In viewing the film, I was particularly interested in the images it depicted about the settlement of the West, about the people who were already in the West, and about people who went West looking for new opportunities.

Ford uses the Prescotts, a White family from Missouri bound for California, to tell his story. The film tells the story of three generations of the Prescott family. It focuses on the family’s struggle to settle in the West. Indians, African Americans, and Mexicans are largely invisible in the film. Indians appear in the story when they attack the Prescott family during their long and perilous journey. The Mexicans appearing in the film are bandits who rob a train and are killed. The several African Americans in the film are in the background silently rowing a boat. At various points in the film, Indians are referred to as *hostile Indians* and as *squaws*.

*How the West Was Won* is a masterpiece in American popular culture. It not only depicts some of the major themes in American culture about the winning of the West; it also reinforces and perpetuates dominant societal attitudes, folk beliefs, and myths about ethnic groups and gives credence to the notion that the West was won by liberty-loving, hard-working people who pursued freedom for all. The film narrator states near its end, “[The movement West] produced a people free to dream, free to act, and free to mold their own destiny.”

**Mainstream Academic Knowledge**

Mainstream academic knowledge consists of the concepts, paradigms, theories, and explanations that constitute traditional and established knowledge in the behavioral and social sciences. An important tenet within the mainstream academic paradigm is that there is a set of objective truths that can be verified through rigorous and objective research procedures that are uninfluenced by human interests, values, and perspectives (Greer, 1969; Kaplan, 1964). This empirical knowledge constitutes a body of objective truths that should make up the core of the school and university curriculum. Much of this objective knowledge originated in the West but is considered universal in nature and application.

Mainstream academic knowledge is the knowledge that multicultural critics such as Ravitch and Finn (1987), Hirsch (1987), and Bloom (1987) claim is threatened by the addition of content about women and ethnic groups of color to the school, college, and university curriculum.
This knowledge reflects the established, Western-oriented canon that has historically dominated university research and teaching in Western nations. Mainstream academic knowledge consists of the theories and interpretations that are internalized and accepted by most university researchers, academic societies, and organizations such as the American Historical Association, the American Sociological Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Academy of Sciences.

It is important to realize, however, that an increasing number of university scholars are critical theorists and postmodernists who question the empirical paradigm that dominates Western science (Giroux 1983; Rosenau, 1992). Many of these individuals are members of national academic organizations such as the American Historical Association and the American Sociological Association. In most of these professional organizations, the postmodern scholars—made up of significant numbers of scholars of color and feminists—have formed caucuses and interest groups within the mainstream professional organizations.

I am not claiming that there is a uniformity of belief among mainstream academic scholars, but rather that there are dominant canons, paradigms, and theories that are accepted by the community of mainstream academic scholars and researchers. These established canons and paradigms are occasionally challenged within the mainstream academic community itself. However, they receive their most serious challenges from academics outside the mainstream, such as scholars within the transformative academic community described later (Collins, 2000; Okihiro, 1994; Takaki, 1993).

Mainstream academic knowledge, like the other forms of knowledge discussed in this chapter, is not static, but is dynamic, complex, and changing. Challenges to the dominant canons and paradigms within mainstream academic knowledge come from both within and without. These challenges lead to changes, reinterpretations, debates, disagreements, paradigm shifts, and new theories and interpretations. Kuhn (1970) states that a scientific revolution takes place when a new paradigm emerges and replaces an existing one. What is more typical in education and the social sciences is that competing paradigms coexist, although particular ones are more influential during certain times or periods.

We can examine the treatment of slavery within the mainstream academic community over time, or the treatment of the American Indian, to identify ways that mainstream academic knowledge has changed in important ways since the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the United States. Ulrich B. Phillips’ highly influential book, *American Negro Slavery*, published in 1918, dominated the way Black slavery was interpreted until his views were challenged by researchers in the 1950s (Stampp, 1956). Phillips was a respected authority on the antebellum South and on slavery. His book, which became a historical classic, is
essentially an apology for Southern slaveholders (Smith & Inscoe, 1993). A new paradigm about slavery was developed in the 1970s that drew heavily upon the slaves’ view of their own experiences (Blassingame, 1972; Gutmann, 1976).

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the American Indian was portrayed in mainstream academic knowledge as either a noble or a hostile savage (Hoxie, 1988). Other notions that became institutionalized within mainstream academic knowledge include the idea that Columbus discovered America and that America was a thinly populated frontier when the Europeans arrived in the late 15th century. In his influential paper, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” Frederick Jackson Turner (1894/1989) argued that the frontier, which he regarded as a wilderness, was the main source of American democracy. Although Turner’s thesis is now criticized by revisionist historians, his essay established a conception of the West that has been highly influential in American mainstream scholarship, in the popular culture, and in schoolbooks. The conception of the West constructed by Turner is still influential in the school curriculum and in textbooks.

These ideas also became institutionalized within mainstream academic knowledge: The slaves were happy and contented; most of the important ideas that became a part of American civilization came from Western Europe; and the history of the United States has been one of constantly expanding progress and increasing democracy. African slaves were needed to transform the United States from an empty wildness into an industrial democratic civilization. The American Indians had to be Christianized and removed to reservations in order for the United States to become an industrialized nation.

**Transformative Academic Knowledge**

Transformative academic knowledge consists of concepts, paradigms, themes, and explanations that challenge mainstream academic knowledge and that expand the historical and literary canon. Transformative academic knowledge challenges some of the key assumptions that mainstream scholars make about the nature of knowledge. Transformative and mainstream academic knowledge are based on different epistemological assumptions about the nature of knowledge, about the influence of human interests and values on knowledge construction, and about the purpose of knowledge.

An important tenet of mainstream academic knowledge is that it is neutral, objective, and uninfluenced by human interests and values. Transformative academic knowledge reflects postmodern assumptions and goals about the nature and goals of knowledge (Foucault, 1972; Rorty, 1989; Rosenau, 1992). Transformative academic scholars assume
that knowledge is not neutral but is influenced by human interests, that all knowledge reflects the power and social relationships within society, and that an important purpose of knowledge construction is to help people improve society (Code, 1991; Harding, 2012). Knowledge and its construction are linked to action and the improvement of society to make it more just and humane.

These statements reflect some of the significant ideas and concepts in transformative academic knowledge in the United States: Columbus did not discover America. The Indians had been living in the Americas for about 40,000 years when the Europeans arrived. Concepts such as “The European Discovery of America” and “The Westward Movement” need to be reconceptualized and viewed from the perspectives of different cultural and ethnic groups. The Lakota Sioux’s homelnd was not the West to them; it was the center of the universe. It was not West for the Alaskans—it was South. It was East for the Japanese and North for the people who lived in Mexico. The history of the United States has not been one of continuous progress toward democratic ideals (Foner, 1998). Rather, the nation’s history has been characterized by a cyclic quest for democracy and by conflict, struggle, violence, and exclusion (Acuña, 2007; Zinn, 1980). A major challenge for the United States is how to make its democratic ideals a reality for all of its citizens.

**Pedagogical Knowledge**

Pedagogical knowledge consists of the facts, concepts, and generalizations presented in textbooks, teachers’ guides, and other forms of media designed for instruction. Pedagogical knowledge also consists of the mediation and interpretation of the information in instructional materials and resources. The textbook is the main source of pedagogical knowledge in schools in the United States (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991). Studies of textbooks indicate that these are some of the major themes in pedagogical knowledge in the United States (C. A. M. Banks, in press; Loewen, 1995):

1. America’s founding fathers, such as Washington and Jefferson, were highly moral, liberty-loving men who championed equality and justice for all Americans.
2. The United States is a nation with justice, liberty, and freedom for all.
3. Social-class divisions are not significant issues in the United States.
4. There are no significant gender, class, or racial divisions within U.S. society.
5. Ethnic groups of color and Whites interact harmoniously in the United States.
Table 5.1 summarizes the definition for each of the five types of knowledge.

**Transformative and Mainstream Citizenship Education**

*Transformative citizenship education*—which is rooted in transformative academic knowledge—enables students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to challenge inequality within their communities, nation, and the world, and to take actions to create just and democratic multicultural
knowledge construction and curriculum reform

Communities and societies (Banks, 2007). Transformative citizenship education helps students to develop decision-making and social action skills that are needed to identify problems in society, acquire knowledge related to them, identify and clarify their values, and take thoughtful individual and/or effective collective action (Banks & Banks, with Clegg, 1999).

Students must experience just and democratic schools, classrooms, and public sites in order to internalize democratic values. Consequently, the school and public sites such as museums and historical monuments must be reconstructed in order to implement transformative citizenship education. Existing power relationships are challenged and are not reproduced in transformative democratic classrooms and schools. Transformative citizenship education, which takes place in democratic schools, fosters equality and recognition for students from diverse groups, and helps students acquire the knowledge and skills needed to take action to make their communities, the nation, and the world just places in which to live.

Mainstream citizenship education, which is grounded in mainstream knowledge and assumptions, reinforces the status quo and the dominant power relationships in society. It does not challenge or disrupt the class, racial, and gender discrimination within educational institutions or society. The emphasis in mainstream citizenship education is on memorizing facts about constitutions and other legal documents, learning about various branches of government, and developing loyalty to the nation-state. Critical thinking skills, decision making, and action are not important components of mainstream citizenship education. It is practiced in most social studies classrooms in many nations, including the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Transformative Citizenship Education and Educational Reform

Citizenship education must be transformed in order to help students to acquire the knowledge, values, and skills needed to become cosmopolitan citizens who have a commitment to act to make their communities, nation, and the world more just and humane (Banks, 2007). A holistic paradigm, which conceptualizes the school as an interrelated whole, is needed to implement transformative citizenship education (see Figure 1.1 on page 2). Conceptualizing the school as a social system can help educators develop effective reform strategies that can help students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and values needed to participate in reflective decision-making and citizen action (Newmann, 1975). Both research and theory indicate that educators can successfully intervene to help students increase their academic achievement (Lee, 2007) and develop democratic attitudes and values (Banks & Banks, 2004; Stephan & Vogt, 2004).
Conceptualizing the school as a social system means that educators should formulate and initiate a change strategy that reforms the total institutional environment in order to implement transformative citizenship education that promotes social justice and human rights. Reforming any one variable, such as curriculum materials and the formal curriculum, is necessary but not sufficient. Multicultural and sensitive teaching materials are ineffective in the hands of teachers who have negative attitudes and low expectations for students from diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups. Such teachers are likely to use multicultural materials rarely or to use them in a detrimental way when they do. Thus, helping teachers and other members of the school develop democratic attitudes and values is essential when implementing transformative citizenship education (Green, 2005).

Transformative Democratic Citizens
The goal of transformative citizenship education is to socialize students who will become socially committed, active, and transformative citizens. The characteristics of transformative citizens in a multicultural democratic society are summarized in Figure 5.2. These citizens have

![Diagram of the characteristics of the effective citizen in a multicultural democratic society]

**FIGURE 5.2** Characteristics of the Effective Citizen in a Multicultural Democratic Society
democratic attitudes and values toward diverse groups, and the knowledge and skills needed to function within their own cultural group as well as within other ethnic and cultural groups in the nation, region, and global community. They also have the knowledge and skills needed to engage in deliberation and power sharing with individuals from other racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious groups. In addition, transformative citizens have clarified and reflective cultural, national, regional, and global identifications as well as the knowledge, commitment, and skills needed to act to promote social justice and human rights within their local communities, nation, region, and the global community.