



## Preface

Our population has changed dramatically since the first edition of this text was written (more than three decades ago) due to changes in immigration policies and the influx of newcomers from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. Immigration engenders ethnicity, and today our school-age population is more diverse than ever before in terms of languages spoken at home, race, religion, and national origin. Religious pluralism is growing; more than 20 percent of our school-age population is either an immigrant or the child of immigrants, and more and more of these newcomers are moving into the heartland of America. Therefore, a major aspect of this book is to provide readers with an accessible overview of contemporary immigration, how it affects our schools and society, and how teachers can be successful in linguistically and ethno/racially diverse classrooms.

Tragic events like the Boston Marathon bombings can become an attack on diversity when the focus is on the fact that the perpetrators are from a different country or religion, especially those of the Muslim faith. These events can also remind us of basic democratic values that underlie the American Creed as well as cultural pluralism. And they remind us of the need for informed, culturally competent citizens who can help us navigate cultural conflict and misunderstanding with calmness and compassion. Culturally competent teachers have a critical role to play in the education of future citizens who affirm cultural, linguistic, religious, and racial diversity and are willing to take a stand against stereotyping and scapegoating “others.”

President Barack Obama affirmed the core values of multicultural education in his Second Inaugural Address when he reminded us of “the promise of our democracy.” He stated,

*We recall that what binds this nation together is not the colors of our skin or the tenets of our faith or the origins of our names. What makes us exceptional—what makes us American—is our allegiance to an idea articulated in a declaration made more than two centuries ago:*

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness....”*

*It is now our generation’s task to carry on what those pioneers began. For our journey is not complete until our wives, our mothers and daughters can earn a living equal to their efforts. Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law—for if we*

*are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well. Our journey is not complete until no citizen is forced to wait for hours to exercise the right to vote. Our journey is not complete until we find a better way to welcome the striving, hopeful immigrants who still see America as a land of opportunity—until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country. Our journey is not complete until all our children, from the streets of Detroit to the hills of Appalachia, to the quiet lanes of Newtown, know that they are cared for and cherished and always safe from harm.*

As we face horrific global terrorism; persistent conflict in the Middle East; growing economic inequalities at home, with about 40 percent of our children living at or below the poverty level; and ongoing racial and socioeconomic inequities in our schools, there are ways future decisions can be enlightened by greater multicultural knowledge and competence. As we seek wise and compassionate decisions for the future, the ideals, knowledge base, and practices of multicultural education are essential. Classroom teachers as well as educators in college, community, and religious settings across the globe can make a difference in meeting this need. We can start small with the young children and youth in our own classrooms, making sure each one reaches his or her potential for academic achievement as well as fair-minded thought, compassion, and concern for fellow humans everywhere. In addition to developing a strong sense of self, including ethnic, national, and religious or spiritual identities, our children and youth need to gain the ability to view people and events from multiple perspectives and to recognize hidden societal structures of oppression as a foundation for action as young adults. To some readers this may sound overly optimistic or unrealistic, given the many demands teachers face every day. Indeed, since the 1960s, multicultural education scholars and advocates have been idealistic and hopeful for educational reform that can make a difference in our society and world. Current national and world events have only intensified these hopes and ideals.

## New to This Edition

In response to extensive reviewer feedback as well as new research and world events since writing the last edition, this eighth edition reflects the following changes and additions:

- New Chapter 4 in Part I: “Affirming Religious Pluralism in U.S. Schools and Society.”
- New Chapter 9 in Part II: “U.S. Immigrants from the Middle East: Arab American Perspectives.”
- End-of-chapter follow-up questions and activities facilitate knowledge construction and the application of theory to practice. Sample answers to Compare and Contrast items are located in Appendix A.
- New case examples at the end of Chapters 4, 9, and 11 focus on leadership and change in schools and classrooms.

- Additions to Chapter 6, “Colonialism, Involuntary Immigration, and the American Dream: American Indian and African American Perspectives” include Indian boarding schools and deculturalization, the American Indian Movement (AIM), and the “long civil rights movement.”
- Reorganization of Chapter 5, “Immigration and the American Dream: European American Perspectives,” and Chapter 13, “Curriculum Transformation,” and sample lessons previously included in Chapter 13 are now located in Appendix A and are referenced at the end of appropriate chapters throughout the text.
- Expansion of and greater emphasis on migrant farm workers, Latino youth, and the DREAM Act (Chapter 7); the model minority stereotype (Chapter 8); the “achievement gap,” needs of LGBT youth, and “Race to the Top” initiatives (Chapter 11); and race as a social construction (Chapter 2).
- Substantial updates to census data, current indicators of racism, and the demographics of poverty, school achievement, and so on.
- Four case studies included in the Instructor Manual (IM): “Creating Supportive Classroom Environments for Immigrant Children,” “Creating Positive School-Family Connections,” “Implementing Principles of Social Justice,” and “Developing the Ability to Teach about Race and Racism.”

*Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice* was first written for my students and others new to the field of multicultural education. My goal in the early 1980s was to create a framework that would help them make sense out of a complex, ambiguous, multidisciplinary field that asks teachers to take risks and deal with controversial topics such as prejudice, racism, social justice, and cultural pluralism. I wanted to provide some of the historical background, basic terminology, and social science concepts that many students have not yet encountered when they enter the field. I hoped to engage readers on an emotional level, move them to take action in their classrooms, and encourage them to pursue academic inquiry and self-reflection after the book had been read. While the book’s basic philosophy and approach remain the same, changes in later editions have grown out of more than thirty years of conversations with my own students as well as other students and instructors who are engaged in multicultural teacher education. These conversations have provided a steady barometer of the book’s strengths and limitations, and they indicate that the book stimulates thinking and dialogue about critical issues in multicultural education in ways that I had only hoped would be possible.

The book deals with questions students continually ask that too often are left hanging. Doesn’t multicultural education lead to lower academic standards? Won’t cultural pluralism lead to the Balkanization of our society? Aren’t we really stereotyping when we talk about cultural differences? Isn’t it racist? Are you saying I can’t set up my own standards for acceptable behavior in my classroom? How can I add multicultural content when I don’t have time to cover the basic curriculum? What does multicultural education have to do with math and science or with physical education? Doesn’t multicultural education really boil down to indoctrination?

My approach to multicultural education focuses on ethnic diversity and community in the United States, diversity rooted in racial, cultural, and individual

differences; it also emphasizes basic human similarities and global connections; and it addresses the structural barriers (often hidden) in schools and society that keep racial injustice and oppression alive. Given that we live in a multicultural world, multicultural education is for everyone. Few of our nation's schools, however, have become multicultural in their vision or practice. They are hampered by societal policies and practices, often beyond their control, that impede reform of formal and hidden curricula. Shortage of funds and lack of understanding, for example, make it difficult for schools to replace or supplement biased or outdated books and films, to hire new personnel who can provide positive role models from a variety of ethnic groups, or to study alternatives to discriminatory school practices in areas such as co-curricular activities or student discipline. Teachers and administrators who are uninformed about cultural diversity, whose knowledge of history and current events is mono-cultural in scope, and who are unaware of institutional racism and/or their own prejudices are likely to hinder the academic success and personal development of many students, however unintentional this may be. And curriculum standards usually provide little help in the development of content that includes diverse ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, or global perspectives. How we might meet challenges such as these through multicultural education is what *Comprehensive Multicultural Education* is about.

The book's approach is unique in several ways. First, its content is comprehensive and interdisciplinary in scope and practical in focus. Key concepts from education, history, ethnic studies, and the social sciences are often explained with primary source material, and the implications for teaching and learning are developed through vignettes of teachers and students I have known over the years. A primary goal is to assist practicing and prospective teachers to bridge the gap between multicultural concepts or theories and practices in our schools, such as classroom management, instructional strategies, and curriculum development.

Second, the book develops an interaction between cultural and individual differences. Teachers often fear that tuning into students' cultural differences is an indication of being prejudiced or racist. This fear is related to the misconception that equates color consciousness with racism. It also stems from feelings that differences are bad or inferior and from the mistaken notion that recognition of differences means we must imitate or adopt these differences. Many cultural awareness and human relations workshops have failed because these basic concerns of the participants were not dealt with. On the other hand, most teachers do believe in differentiating or personalizing their instruction. Most would agree that our ultimate goal as teachers is to foster the intellectual, social, and personal development of all students to each one's fullest potential. This book shows that the ability to reach this goal can be strengthened by an understanding of cultural and individual differences, as well as societal contexts.

The book's conceptual framework (see Figure 1.1) integrates four dimensions that are developed throughout the chapters: (1) equity pedagogy (a focus on *classroom instruction* and an end to the achievement gap); (2) curriculum reform (focus on *content* inquiry and transformation guided by four core values: acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity, respect for human dignity and universal human rights, reverence for the earth, and responsibility to a world community); (3)

multicultural competence (focus on the *individual's* ethnic identity development and reduction of all forms of prejudice and discrimination), and (4) social justice (a focus on *society*; becoming agents of change, however small the steps; and the eventual eradication of racism and other forms of oppression locally, nationally and globally).

Part I, “The Case for Multicultural Education,” includes a new chapter, “Affirming Religious Pluralism in U.S. Schools and Society.” This chapter provides an overview of the origins of religious diversity and conflict, religious freedom and the First Amendment, and religious pluralism today; discusses religious pluralism and prejudice through Jewish and Muslim American perspectives; and concludes with case examples of leadership professionals in “From Prejudice to Pluralism: What Can Teachers Do?”

Part II, “Roots of Ethnic Diversity in the United States: The Conflicting Themes of Assimilation and Pluralism,” has been expanded from four to five chapters with separate chapters for Asian Americans (Chapter 8) and immigrants from the Middle East (Chapter 9). Part II contains updated demographic data in all chapters and adds new content to further develop the theme that was introduced in the Seventh Edition—“Immigration and the American Dream”—as well as the analytic framework based on the classic (1880–1924) and contemporary (post-1965) immigration eras. Chapters 5 through 9 develop classic and contemporary immigration perspectives in light of immigration and the American dream among European Americans (a reorganized Chapter 5); colonialism, involuntary immigration, and the American Dream among American Indians and African Americans (an expanded Chapter 6); colonialism, immigration, and the American Dream among Latinos (Chapter 7); and contemporary immigration and the American dream among Asian Americans (Chapter 8) and immigrants from the Middle East (a new Chapter 9). Recent case study research by ethno-geographers provides representative examples of immigrant experiences in the heartland (e.g., Latinos and Asians) as well as on the West Coast (e.g., Ukrainians) and in the Southwest (e.g., Mexicans and Cubans). The chapter on American Indians and African Americans is expanded to include Indian boarding schools and deculturalization, the American Indian Movement (AIM), and “the long civil rights movement.” The chapter on Latinos contains new sections on migrant farm workers and Latino youth and the DREAM Act, and the chapter on Asian Americans contains a new section on the model minority stereotype. Differences within the Asian and Latino pan-ethnic groups are examined in terms of socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and assimilation issues associated with people from different nations of origin (e.g., Filipinos, Chinese, South Asian Indians, Koreans, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Hmong among Asian Americans and Latinos from the Caribbean and Mexico). The new chapter on immigrants from the Middle East provides a basic geo-political and historical context about the Middle East; discusses misconceptions about the Arab world and the legacy of Western colonialism; provides an overview of the rapidly growing immigrant population from the Middle East; and concludes with case examples focused on what educators can do to clear up misconceptions and stereotypes.

Part III is renamed “Teaching in a Multicultural Society.” It now includes the revised, shortened, and renamed final chapter, Chapter 13, “Curriculum Transformation.”

At the suggestion of several reviewers, lesson plans formerly included in this chapter are now located in Appendix B and are referenced at the end of selected chapters to help students see classroom implications of the text's historical and social science content. Part III also includes Chapter 10, "Learning Styles and Culturally Competent Teaching;" Chapter 11, "Reaching All Learners: Perspectives on Gender, Class, and Special Needs;" and Chapter 12 (written by James Damico), "Teaching in Linguistically Diverse Classrooms." Chapter 10 ties into contemporary immigration issues in schools (e.g., culture in teaching and learning and the needs of students and parents who are immigrants, including refugees), and Chapter 11 contains expanded content on the "achievement gap," poverty, and the needs of LGBT youth.

The new edition's three-part structural organization gives readers and instructors flexibility as to the order in which chapters are read or assigned in various course syllabi. Some instructors prefer to start with Chapter 11 (the achievement gap, demographics, and so on), some with Chapter 13 (multicultural curriculum decision making and sample lessons), and some with Chapter 2 (culture and the contexts of multicultural teaching), whereas many others use the book's structure as the basic outline for their course. At the request of reviewers and users, this revision includes chapter-end instructional tools (i.e., compare and contrast, questions, and follow-up activities) in the text rather than the Instructor Manual (IM). And in place of a glossary, Appendix A provides sample answers for selected compare-and-contrast items per chapter that include implications for the classroom.

### **Supplements for the Instructor**

The following ancillary materials have been developed to support instructors using this text. These instructor supplements are located on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC) at [www.pearsonhighered.com](http://www.pearsonhighered.com). Please contact your Pearson representative if you need assistance downloading them from the IRC.

### **Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank**

The Instructor Manual/Test Bank includes (1) chapter objectives; (2) chapter short-answer test items that could also be used as study guides to help new students comprehend chapter content; (3) sample course syllabi; (4) a range of instructional activities and simulations; (5) a multicultural "knowledge bowl"; (6) selected film discussions; (7) sample lesson plans not included in the text; and (8) selected readings.

### **PowerPoint™ Presentations**

Ideal for lecture presentations or student handouts, the PowerPoint™ Presentations for each chapter includes key concept summaries.

### **Acknowledgments**

For this eighth edition, I am especially grateful to James Damico, a colleague in the Department of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education at Indiana University,

who authored the chapter “Teaching in Linguistically Diverse Classrooms” (Chapter 12) and developed the Chapter 12 supplements. And I am deeply grateful to the former students and colleagues who have given me permission to include their lesson plans in Appendix B. I also want to thank the four reviewers who provided numerous insightful suggestions, including the new chapter on Affirming Religious Pluralism in U.S. Schools and Society, end-of-chapter knowledge construction and decision making activities for teachers and administrators, and additional graphics and teaching tools. They are Julianna M. Alitto, University of Wisconsin-Waukesha; Aaron Charles Bruewer, Ball State University; Adam Foley, Iowa State University; and Cynthia M. Compton, Wingate School of Graduate and Continuing Education. Warmest thanks go to Cynthia DeRocco at Pearson for her cheerful assistance as project manager and for helping me locate new photographs and maps; to Renae Horstman at Integra-Chicago who worked on the many permissions that were needed for this edition; to Kristin Jobe of Interga-Chicago for her calm flexibility and expertise during production; to Linda Bishop at Pearson who kindly served as interim editor early in the project; and to Pearson’s Meredith Fossel who took over as editor in the final months of production. Pearson’s Johanna Burke also worked on permissions and I appreciate her expertise in this area. As ever, my deepest appreciation goes to David Blair, my soul mate and fellow educator who provides love, energy, and boundless support. Over the many years of revision and new editions, Dave was a great listener, critic, and technology assistant whose patience never flagged during the tedious process of researching statistical data and producing the instructor manual and Power Point presentations. This book is dedicated to our grandchildren, Max, Ty, Ava, and Griffin, and the children of their generation with the hope that worldwide justice and peace will become a reality in the twenty-first century.



Fotolia.

# Part I

## The Case for Multicultural Education

# CHAPTER 1

## Multicultural Schools: What, Why, and How

Envision a society where *all* the nation's schoolchildren are provided the educational opportunities and support needed to reach their fullest potential; a society where all teachers are caring and culturally competent advocates for students from all ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, family, and personal backgrounds; a society where teachers are fully supported in material and nonmaterial ways as they engage in this important work for the nation. Envision, also, an interconnected world where local, national, and global societies are working toward equity, environmental sustainability, wise innovation, economic security, and affirmation of the common good on a global scale.

Can we ever attain this vision? Whatever the answer, it is imperative that we try; the alternative is too grim to imagine. Because teachers play a crucial role in this vision, their work can be extraordinarily rewarding. However, classroom teaching in the twenty-first century is demanding and difficult work, especially given the intense national climate of educational standards, high-stakes testing, growing racial and cultural diversity within the school-age population, inadequate resources in many schools, and the ever-increasing expectations for schools to address special needs and community concerns. While recognizing the challenges teachers face, this book takes a hopeful approach that teachers *can* make a difference. It provides a foundation for multicultural teaching in any school context, a foundation developed from theory, research, and practice in multicultural education that spans nearly four decades. Advocates of multicultural education believe teachers can make a difference—locally, nationally, and globally—by preparing future world citizens who understand that without social justice there cannot be lasting peace.



### What Is Multicultural Education?<sup>1</sup>

Multicultural education is a complex approach to teaching and learning that includes the movement toward equity in schools and classrooms, the transformation of the curriculum, the process of becoming multiculturally competent, and the commitment to address societal injustices. Multicultural education originated in the United States as a hopeful and idealistic response to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and

1960s; its primary purpose was reformation of the nation's schools. The *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954 reversed the legality of "separate but equal schools" and triggered rising expectations and aspirations for equal opportunity and social justice, especially in public education. Instead, disproportionately high numbers of the nation's African American, American Indian, and Latino children and youth were placed in "special" education for the handicapped or "culturally disadvantaged." Others were suspended or expelled for reasons of "teacher discretion" or attended schools where teachers and the curriculum reflected primarily Anglo-European American perspectives. In reaction, the multicultural education movement emerged quickly and passionately, drawing upon a long history of multidisciplinary inquiry, artistic and literary achievement, social action, and scholarly writing. By the early 1970s, the movement had embraced a set of core values and ideals that stand in contrast to the old "culturally disadvantaged" and assimilationist Anglo-Eurocentric perspectives that pervaded the nation's school systems. It rests upon four broad principles: (1) the theory of cultural pluralism; (2) the ideals of social justice, which would bring an end to racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression; (3) affirmations of culture in the teaching and learning process; and (4) visions of educational equity and excellence leading to high levels of academic learning and personal development for all children and youth.

In particular, the ideal of cultural pluralism is a foundational principle of multicultural education in the United States. Developed early in the twentieth century by democratic philosopher Horace Kallen at the time of the "great deluge" of immigrants from Europe, the concept of cultural pluralism affirms the democratic right of each ethnic group to retain its own heritage as the newcomers become acculturated and are integrated into society.<sup>2</sup> It envisions a society based upon core values of equity and social justice; respect for human dignity and universal human rights; and the freedom to maintain one's language and culture, provided the human dignity and rights of others are not violated. It stands as a compromise between cultural assimilation on the one hand, whereby ethnic minority groups are expected to give up their language and culture to blend into mainstream Anglo-European culture, and segregation or suppression of ethnic minorities on the other hand.<sup>3</sup> Although ethnic minorities may be expected to compromise in some areas in order to maintain societal harmony and national identity, implicit are the assumptions that every child's home culture must be affirmed and respected and opportunities must be provided for *all* children to reach their fullest potential. Although cultural pluralism was not widely accepted during Kallen's lifetime and most immigrants from past eras did assimilate, as we shall see in Part II of this book, it was revived in the 1960s and 1970s, and today this ideal is widely accepted.

A second foundational principle of multicultural education is antiracism and the elimination of structural inequities related to identity groups beyond ethnic groups, such as race, class, and gender. In particular, the redress of *racial* inequities in a society built upon and maintained by White privilege is a primary focus of multicultural education, especially societal structures rooted in deep-seated structural injustices and systematic patterns of dominance and suppression that denied people of color economic and political equality. The end of institutional and cultural racism is at the

heart of multicultural education, even when conceptions of diversity are expanded to include gender, class, disabilities, and sexual preference.

A third foundational principle is the importance of culture in teaching and learning. The concept of culture has been described as anthropology's "seminal contribution" and a "welcome palliative to existing notions of inherited, and therefore immutable, racial differences."<sup>4</sup> *Culture* refers to a people's shared knowledge, beliefs, social values, worldviews, and preferred standards of behaving, as well as the material products they create. In a culturally diverse society such as the United States, it is not possible to "individualize" or personalize instruction, an idea most teachers embrace, without considering culture.

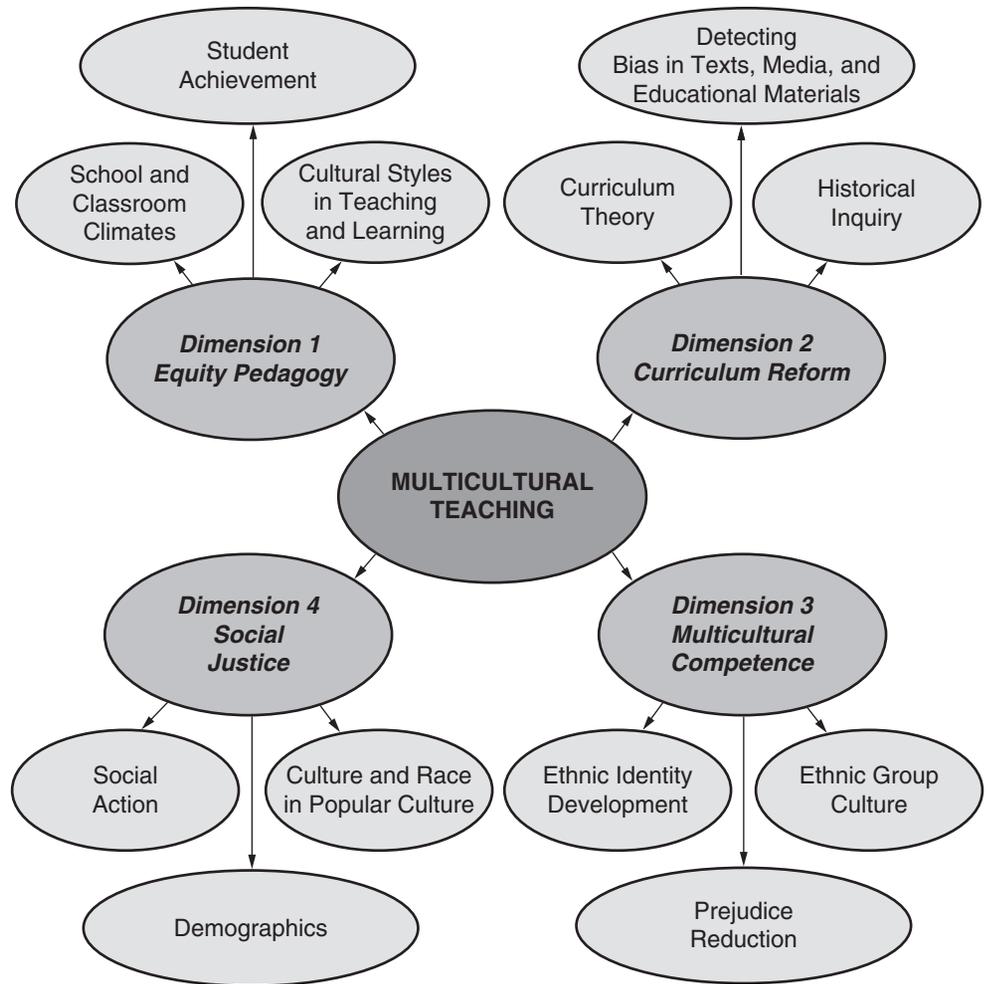
Finally, the need for academic excellence and equity is also a foundational principle of multicultural education. *Equity* in education means equal opportunities for all students to reach their fullest potential. It must not be confused with *equality* or sameness of result or even identical experiences. Student potentials may be diverse, and at times equity requires different treatment according to relevant differences, such as instruction in a language the child can understand. Achieving educational excellence requires an impartial, just education system where all students are perceived to be capable of learning at high levels and are provided opportunities to be academically successful.

These principles of cultural pluralism, eradication of racism and other forms of oppression, the importance of culture in teaching and learning, and high equitable expectations for student learning provide the basic premises and philosophy that underlie the conceptual framework proposed in Figure 1.1. The framework depicts four interactive dimensions of multicultural teaching that are developed throughout this book.

### **Dimension One: Equity Pedagogy**

*Equity pedagogy* envisions teachers who create positive classroom climates, use culturally responsive teaching to foster student achievement, and consider cultural styles and culturally based child socialization, as well as the conditions of poverty or wealth, in their approach to teaching and learning. Equity pedagogy aims at achieving fair and equal educational opportunities for all of the nation's children and youth, particularly ethnic minorities and the economically disadvantaged. It attempts to transform the total school environment, especially the hidden curriculum expressed in teacher expectations for student learning, as well as the grouping of students and instructional strategies, school disciplinary policies and practices, school and community relations, and classroom climates. Greater equity would help reverse the problems many ethnic minorities and low-income students face in our schools and ensure that they attain the highest standards of academic excellence.

Millions of children enter our schools each year with little or no proficiency in the English language. The story of Jesús Martínez, a highly intelligent Puerto Rican child, is echoed in the school experiences of many language minority children in schools across the country. His example on page 6 shows the need for equity pedagogy.



**Figure 1.1** A Conceptual Framework of Multicultural Teaching

Source: Adapted from C. I. Bennett (2001) "Genres or Research in Multicultural Education," *Review of Education Research*, 72(2), 171-217.

### Dimension Two: Curriculum Reform

*Curriculum reform* envisions teachers who conduct inquiry to rethink and transform the traditional curriculum, which (in the United States) is primarily Anglo-European in scope. Curriculum reform expands traditional course content through inclusion of multiethnic and global perspectives. For most of us, this revision requires active inquiry and the development of new knowledge and understanding about cultural differences and the history and contributions of contemporary ethnic groups and nations, as well as of various civilizations in the past. This aspect of multicultural



## The Example of Jesús Martínez

Jesús Martínez was a bright, fine-looking six-year-old when he migrated with his family from Puerto Rico to New York City. At a time when he was ready to learn to read and write his mother tongue, Jesús was instead suddenly thrust into an English-only classroom where the only tool he possessed for oral communication (the Spanish language) was completely useless to him. Jesús and his teacher could not communicate with each other because each spoke a different language, and neither spoke the language of the other. Jesús felt stupid, or retarded; his teacher perceived him to be culturally disadvantaged and beyond her help. However, she and the school officials agreed to allow him to “sit there” because the law required that he be in school.

For the next two years Jesús “vegetated” in classes he did not understand—praying that the teacher would not call on him. She rarely did and seldom collected his papers, since she felt Jesús was not capable of what “more fortunate” children could do. Jesús’ self-concept began to deteriorate.

Another Puerto Rican boy in the classroom who spoke English was asked to teach Jesús English and help him in the process of adjustment. They were not permitted, however, to speak Spanish to each other because the teacher believed it would “confuse Jesús and prolong the period of transition” into English; also, it annoyed other people who could not understand what they were saying. The other boy, then, could not translate academic subject matter for Jesús. Jesús was expected to “break the code,” to learn English before learning his other subjects. By the time he began to understand English, he was so far behind in all his coursework that it was impossible to catch up. He was labeled “handicapped” by his teachers and taunted by his schoolmates. In fact, each time he would attempt to use his English, some of the other children would ridicule him for his imperfect grasp of the language. The teacher thought the teasing was all right because it would force Jesús to check his mistakes and provide him an incentive to learn proper English. School had become a battlefield for Jesús, and he began to find excuses to skip his classes. The situation became unbearable when, as a result of a test administered in English, Jesús was found to be academically retarded and was put in a class for the mentally retarded.

When Jesús finally dropped out of school, he had not learned English well. Today, although he is fluent in Spanish, he has never learned how to read and write his mother tongue. He is functionally illiterate in both languages.

*Source:* Based on F. Cordasco and D. Castellanos. (1973) “Teaching the Puerto Rican Experience,” in J. A. Banks (Ed.), *Teaching Ethnic Studies: Concepts and Strategies* (pp. 227–228). Washington, DC: National Council for Social Studies.

education focuses on both minority and nonminority students, in contrast to equity pedagogy, which targets primarily ethnic minorities and the poor. The importance of curriculum reform is evident in the classroom of Sam Johnson, a middle school science teacher.



## The Example of Sam Johnson's General Science Class

Sam Johnson, general science teacher in Oak Grove Middle School, leaned back in his chair and sighed. The student reports had been a disaster. It's true that technically they were terrific. The students had dutifully done extensive research, and the classroom was decorated with the results of their labor: an elaborate bulletin board on world hunger; large poster displays on nuclear weapons, the expense of toxic waste control, American technological superiority, and biological differences among races; a pictorial essay of famous scientists; an audiovisual show of how the U.S. government disposes of nuclear wastes; and another bulletin board on the AIDS epidemic throughout the world.

What bothered Johnson were the subtle (and not so subtle) expressions of attitudes, values, and beliefs that permeated the student reports. It was clear that the students felt culturally, and even biologically, superior to people from other nations, especially those from the Third World, the "undeveloped countries," as Stacey had referred to them, or the "primitive people," according to John. Sam Johnson had been chilled by Steve's remark that AIDS had originated among African Negroes, showing "a weakness among these people that makes it dangerous for us to associate with them." Margaret and Mark were concerned that nuclear wastes are indeed damaging to human health, as evident by the high rate of leukemia, sterility, and birth defects found in people who drink water from rivers that flow near the deposit sites; they were relieved that these deposits are located on barren lands where few people, mainly Indians, live. One of the bulletin board panels on world hunger explained how the infant death rate climbed in "undeveloped countries" after the United States sent huge supplies of canned formula, because the sanitary conditions were inadequate to keep the baby bottles clean. One would also conclude from this display that all the world's starving people are dark skinned and have naked children; there was no indication that millions of North American children suffer from malnutrition and poverty. Rachael's research on famous scientists showed the "superiority of modern Western Civilization"; all of her selections were White and male (with the exception of Madame Curie), and there was no recognition of the scientific developments in earlier civilizations across the globe.

Johnson was appalled, and actually a bit scared, by Steve and Peter's brilliant but uncompassionate report on nuclear weapons. The boys had glowed over the fact that "today nuclear weapons are over one million times more destructive than the bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki," and they went on with statistics about the nuclear weapons various nations have stockpiled. Without questioning, they accepted the assumptions that these stockpiles are necessary to prevent a future nuclear holocaust.

What happened to these kids? Sam wondered. How had he failed them? Could anything be done? As he thought back over the school year, he remembered the students' reactions when the Japanese plant for Honda parts was set up in the county. The students reflected their parents' outrage and concern that this was unfair competition for the General Motors factory that provided a major source of employment for the townspeople. Sammy Nakamura, Johnson's only non-White student and one of a handful of Japanese Americans in a town that is over 99 percent White, was beaten on the way home from school, and his family received hate mail and taunts of "Japs go home." Then there was the time Vicki Miller was struck by a car and killed. Joshua had remarked, "That's one less mouth for the government to feed. That whole family has been on welfare for years."

Sam had let these occasions (and others) slip by without any class discussion. So much had to be covered in the eighth-grade curriculum, but he wondered, isn't there a way to do both? Couldn't he teach science in a way that would lessen his students' ethnocentrism and prejudices and deepen their awareness of human similarities and the increasing global interdependence?

The example of Mr. Johnson's science class illustrates the importance of a multicultural curriculum for students in mainstream schools and classrooms, in this case White, middle-income students from a small town that is ethnically encapsulated. Students from monocultural backgrounds must learn about multiple perspectives and worldviews in order to live harmoniously in a multicultural world. Whether a school's student population is multi-ethnic or mono-ethnic, it is essential that students become knowledgeable about increasing global interdependence and the worldviews associated with different nations, as well as attaining an awareness of the state of the planet.<sup>5</sup> In Chapter 13, we will revisit Sam Johnson's classroom and witness the transformation in his students' presentations as a result of the changes Sam made in his curriculum.

### Dimension Three: Multicultural Competence

*Multicultural competence* envisions teachers who are comfortable with and can interact well with students, families, and other teachers who are racially and culturally different from themselves. The process of becoming multicultural is one whereby a person develops competencies in multiple ways of perceiving, evaluating, believing, and doing.<sup>6</sup> The focus is on understanding and learning to negotiate cultural diversity among nations as well as within a single nation and a single classroom. In their book *Communicating with Strangers*, for example, Gudykunst and Kim describe the multicultural person as

*...one who has achieved an advanced level in the process of becoming intercultural and whose cognitive, affective, and behavioral characteristics are not limited but are open to growth beyond the psychological parameters of any one culture.... The intercultural person possesses an intellectual and emotional commitment to the fundamental unity of all humans and, at the same time, accepts and appreciates the differences that lie between people of different cultures.<sup>7</sup>*

According to the authors, *intercultural people*:

- Have encountered experiences that challenge their own cultural assumptions (e.g., culture shock or “dynamic disequilibrium”) and provide insight into how their view of the world has been shaped by their culture
- Can serve as facilitators and catalysts for contacts between cultures
- Come to terms with the roots of their own ethnocentrism and achieve an objectivity in viewing other cultures
- Develop a Third World perspective that gives them the ability to engage in intercultural encounters with authenticity<sup>8</sup>
- Show cultural empathy and can imagine themselves living in the worldview of others<sup>9</sup>

This process of developing multicultural competence is a major goal of multicultural education. It enables students to retain their own cultural identity while functioning in a different cultural milieu; for example, the school. Furthermore, this dimension avoids divisive dichotomies between a student's home culture and mainstream culture and brings about an increased awareness of multiculturalism as "the normal human experience."<sup>10</sup>

### Dimension Four: Social Justice

*Social justice* envisions teachers who are concerned about (and encourage student inquiry about) inequitable social structures; images of race, culture, class, and gender in popular culture; and social action to bring about greater societal equity, both locally and globally. Teaching toward social justice affirms the commitment to combat racism, sexism, and classism (as well as other *isms* that degrade an individual's basic human rights and dignity) through the development of appropriate understanding, attitudes, and social action skills. This essential ingredient of multicultural education addresses the fact that when people acquire knowledge and appreciation of cultural diversity, they will not necessarily be moved to help put an end to prejudice and discrimination or to solve basic problems of inequity.

The social justice dimension might begin with clearing up myths and stereotypes associated with race, culture, and gender, as well as other identity groups. It also brings out basic human similarities, as well as the historical roots and current evidence of individual, institutional, and cultural racism, sexism, and classism in the United States and elsewhere in the world. The ultimate goal is to develop an anti-oppression orientation and antiracist, antisexist, anticlassist behavior in basic everyday life.



## The Core Values in Multicultural Education

Multicultural education has ideological overtones based on democratic ideals that are lacking in less controversial content areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics, reading, or spelling. Arguments may take place over what methods are most appropriate in these other areas, but there is little disagreement about what knowledge is true. In multicultural education, however, where there are no hard and fast rules about truth, there is disagreement about not only what the multicultural curriculum entails, but also whether it should exist at all.

Four core values provide a philosophical framework for the multicultural curriculum model described briefly at the end of this chapter and developed more fully in Chapter 13: (1) acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity, (2) respect for human dignity and universal human rights, (3) responsibility to the world community, and (4) reverence for the earth.<sup>11</sup> These core values are ideals that are yet to become a reality, or even widely accepted, as seen in controversies over environmental issues, national and global inequities between the rich and the poor, terrorism, the death penalty and criminal justice system, and public support for children living in poverty. They are rooted in democratic theory and American Indian philosophy; together they illustrate the strong ethical foundations of multicultural education.

Although democratic principles are set forth in such documents as the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the U.S. Constitution, democracy in the United States falls short of democracy as an ideal. Still, the ideal provides an inspiration for change and reform, as was evident in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, when nonviolent civil disobedience was a tactic used to change unjust discriminatory laws and practices. As a form of government, a way of life, and a goal or ideal, democracy is based on principles of justice and the recognition of the equality and dignity of all persons regardless of race, religion, gender, or lifestyle. It is also based on procedural justice that assures all citizens equal protection under the law and establishes the principle of majority rule with minority rights. A democratic society protects basic liberties such as freedom of speech, conscience, expression, and association, provided that the human dignity and liberty of others are not violated, and it fosters a “free marketplace of ideas” that depends on an informed, participatory citizenry. A democratic society is opposed to indoctrination and censorship and encourages dissent, a free press, free elections, and diverse political parties. And, a democratic society attempts to provide equal educational opportunities to help all citizens develop their full potential.

The fourth value, reverence for the earth, originates in the belief that “all things in the universe are interdependent.” This philosophy develops an understanding of “the balances that exist in all natural systems, or ecology.... All beings are related and therefore human beings must be constantly aware of how our actions will affect other beings, whether these are plants, animals, people, or streams.”<sup>12</sup> It requires a caring and compassionate populace, an ethical community where people do not seek the best for themselves and their families at the expense of others.

The possibility that these core values might someday become widely acceptable is evident in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 and reaffirmed in 1993 at the International Human Rights Conference in Vienna. The declaration, which is designed to serve “as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations,” states that all persons are born free and equal in dignity and expresses basic civil, economic, political, and social rights of all humans.

These values are brought to life in the following Human Manifesto, a document prepared by the Planetary Citizens Registry in Ottawa, Canada:

*Human life on our planet is in jeopardy.*

*It is in jeopardy from war that could pulverize the human habitat. It is in jeopardy from preparations for war that destroy or diminish the prospects of decent existence.*

*It is in jeopardy because of the denial of human rights.*

*It is in jeopardy because the air is being fouled and the waters and soil are being poisoned. If these dangers are to be removed and if human development is to be assured, we the peoples of this planet must accept obligations to each other and to the generations of human beings to come.*

*We have the obligation to free our world of war by creating an enduring basis for worldwide peace.*

*We have the obligation to safeguard the delicate balance of the natural environment and to develop the world's resources for the human good.*

*We have the obligation to make human rights the primary concern of society.  
 We have the obligation to create a world order in which man neither has to kill or  
 be killed.  
 In order to carry out these obligations, we the people of this world assert our primary  
 allegiance to each other in the family of man....  
 Life in the universe is unimaginably rare. It must be protected, respected, cherished.  
 We pledge our energies and resources of spirit to the preservation of the human habitat  
 and to the infinite possibilities of human betterment in our time.<sup>13</sup>*

The core values enable teachers to clarify basic goals about teaching and learning that are multicultural. This clarification is essential in protecting, improving, and building the case for multicultural education and points the way to needed changes should currently held goals be found inappropriate in the future. The core values can also enable teachers to deal more effectively with controversial issues that are an integral part of multicultural education, such as violations of human rights and destruction of the environment.



## Why Is Multicultural Education Essential?

### The Need for Academic Excellence and Equity

Demand for the reform of schooling in the United States was a persistent theme throughout the twentieth century, and it continues today. The educational reform movement gained momentum in the mid-1980s, beginning with the Reagan administration report “A Nation at Risk.” Nearly a dozen additional major reports on U.S. schools appeared in 1983 alone. In January 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. The goal of this legislation was to close the academic achievement gap between White middle-class students and low-income students, as well as students of color and English language learners. On one level, NCLB is consistent with principles of multicultural education in its emphasis on academic success for *all* schoolchildren and the elimination of racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic disparities. But the narrow emphasis on high-stakes standardized tests, a shrinking of the curriculum to line up with the tests rather than curriculum reform and transformation, inconsistencies in how states and school corporations define “success,” inadequate funding, and inequitable school resources, especially in urban areas and high-poverty regions, have made it impossible to reach the NCLB’s goal. Today President Obama’s Race to the Top initiative is the nation’s primary education reform agenda, as discussed in Chapter 11.

The common thread throughout all these reports and initiatives is the demand for a national commitment to true excellence in education. What these reports and initiatives do not acknowledge, however, is that educational excellence in our schools cannot be achieved without educational equity. Equity in education means equal opportunities for all students to develop to their fullest potential. As noted above in the discussion of Core Values, equity in education must not be confused with equality or sameness of result or even identical experiences. At times equity requires different treatment according to relevant differences. For example, the example of

Jesús Martínez on page 6 shows how the exclusive use of English in the classroom provided equal treatment without equity. The common language of instruction was unfair for Jesús because he could not understand English as well as his classmates and was at a disadvantage because all the subjects, including mathematics, science, and social studies, were taught only in English.

Additional evidence of inequity in education exists in the nation's high school dropout rates, which are disproportionately high among African American, American Indian, and Hispanic youth and the poor. In many schools across the nation, racial and language minority students are overrepresented in special education and experience disproportionately high rates of suspension and expulsion. The majority of African American and Latino students attend schools that have large concentrations of economically disadvantaged and/or lower-achieving students who face "opportunity gaps" due to outdated texts, poor facilities, and underprepared teachers.<sup>14</sup> These are schools where teachers often de-emphasize higher-order thinking skills because of the misconception that low-achieving students must master the basic skills before they can develop higher-level skills.<sup>15</sup> Other studies suggest that there is differential treatment and lower teacher expectations of racial and language minority students, compared with their nonminority peers.<sup>16</sup> If these trends are to be reversed, drastic steps are needed to enhance the achievement and academic success of students labeled "at risk." Achieving educational excellence requires an impartial and just educational system. Consider the recent high school graduation rates by ethnicity and gender shown in Table 1.1. These figures come from researchers at the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University (now located at UCLA) who examined the graduation rates for students who complete high school in four years. They make the valid point that most other dropout reports are seriously flawed in that they underreport school dropout rates and inflate graduation rates by looking only at how many members of a senior class graduate and ignoring those who did

 **Table 1.1** High School Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>% of Student Population</i>	<i>Nationwide Graduation Rate</i>	<i>Female Graduation Rate</i>	<i>Male Graduation Rate</i>	<i>% Difference Compared to 74.9% White</i>
American Indian/ AK Native	1.2	51.1	51.4	47.0	-23.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.2	76.8	80.0	72.6	1.9
Hispanic	16.6	53.2	58.5	48.0	-21.7
Black	17.0	50.2	56.2	42.8	-24.7
White	61.0	74.9	77.0	70.8	NA
All Students	99.0	68.0	72.0	64.1	NA

Source: Orfield, G., Losen, D., & Swanson, C. (2004). *Losing Our Future: How Minority Youth Are Being Left Behind by the Graduation Rate Crisis*. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University/UCLA.

not make it to the twelfth grade. Copies of the entire report may be obtained from the group's website: [www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu](http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu).

Several major trends are evident within and across these broad categories of race/ethnic groups. (Some additional *within group* differences based on region and national origin will be noted in Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 9. For example, some Asian groups, such as Japanese Americans, have the highest national graduation rates and others, such as Cambodian, Hmong, or Laotian, have the lowest; the same variation is true among Latino groups.) First of all, we see that the graduation rate for females is higher than males in all five major ethnic groups, with the largest gender differences among Black high school graduates, with 56.2 percent of the females graduating in four years compared to 42.8 percent of the males. Second, we see an overall graduation gap compared to White four-year high school graduates of 50.2 percent for Black students, 51.1 percent for American Indian/Alaskan Native students, and 53.2 percent for Latino students. The percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students who graduate "on time" is slightly higher than White students, at 76.8 percent. Third, the overall high school graduation rates reported here are notably lower than the figures culled from census data, which report graduation rates of over 90 percent for some groups.<sup>17</sup>

The latest U.S. Census report of educational attainment for persons 25 years old and over by race, Hispanic origin, and sex is shown in Table 1.2. Data for 2010 are compared with reports in 1970 and 2000. The overall trends show a steady increase in high school graduation (including GED) for all groups; the highest percentages are for Asian males (91.2 percent) and White females

 **Table 1.2** Educational Attainment by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex: 1970 to 2010 (in percent)

Year	White		Black		Asian and Pacific Islander		Hispanic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR MORE</b>								
1970	54.0	55.0	30.1	32.5	61.3	63.1	37.9	34.2
2000	84.8	85.0	78.8	78.3	88.2	83.4	56.6	57.5
2010	86.9	88.2	83.6	84.6	91.2	87.0	61.4	64.4
<b>COLLEGE GRADUATE OR MORE</b>								
1970	14.4	8.4	4.2	4.6	23.5	17.3	7.8	4.3
2000	28.5	23.9	16.3	16.7	47.6	40.7	10.7	10.6
2010	30.8	29.9	17.7	21.4	55.6	49.5	12.9	14.9

Source: Table 230. Educational Attainment by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex: 1970 to 2010, U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012.

(88.2 percent) and the lowest percentage for Latino males (61.4 percent) and Latinas (64.4 percent). But as shown in Table 7.1 on page 216, when the Hispanic population is broken down by national origin, the high school graduation rate is higher among Cubans (81.4 percent) and Puerto Ricans (74.8 percent) and lower among Mexicans (57.4 percent).

Educational attainment measured by college graduation also shows gains for all groups over time, but it is higher for Asian males (55.6 percent) and females (49.5 percent) compared to Whites males (30.8 percent) and females (29.9 percent). However, these levels of attainment are all substantially higher than the college attainment levels for Black males (17.7 percent) and females (21.4 percent) as well as Latinos (12.9 percent) and Latinas (14.9 percent). Again there are differences among college graduation rates among Latinos; Cubans are at 26.2 percent, Puerto Ricans are at 17.5 percent, and Mexicans are at 10.6 percent (see Table 7.1). In contrast to the model minority myth, there is also diversity among Asians' educational attainment, as discussed in Chapter 10.

Given that the major goal of multicultural education is the development of the intellectual, social, and personal growth of all students to their highest potential, it is no different than the goal of educational excellence. However, it depends on the teacher's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior and whether he or she provides equitable opportunities for learning, changes the monocultural curriculum, and helps all students become more multicultural (i.e., helps them understand different systems of perceiving, evaluating, believing, and doing). This goal includes students in relatively monocultural classes and schools. Although one's ethnic group is just one of a number of identity sources available, ethnicity and social class are at the heart of the equity problem in U.S. society. Therefore, discussions about achieving educational excellence require concern about those ethnic groups that are consistently cut off from equal access to a good education.

There is a lot of rhetoric in education about the human potential and the need for equality of opportunity. Multicultural education moves beyond the rhetoric and recognizes that the potential for brilliance is sprinkled evenly across all ethnic groups. When social conditions and school practices hinder the development of this brilliance among students outside the predominant culture, as is the case within our society, the waste of human potential affects us all. The cumulative loss of talented scientists, artists, writers, doctors, teachers, spiritual leaders, and financial and business experts is staggering. The concern for developing human potential goes beyond individuals with special talents and gifts, however. High levels of development and achievement are believed possible for nearly everyone. Only those who are known to have limited mental capacity or to have severe psychological problems might be considered to be beyond the reach of most schools. (And this is only because most teachers must work with large groups of students and often lack the resources or skills required for learners with special needs.)

Multicultural education contributes to excellence in a second important way: It builds knowledge about various ethnic groups and national perspectives into the curriculum. The traditional curriculum is filled with inaccuracies and omissions

concerning the contributions and life conditions of major ethnic groups within our society and for nations across the globe.<sup>18</sup> Obviously, the attainment of any degree of excellence is stunted by curriculum content that is untrue or incomplete. Given that we live in an interdependent world that is rapidly shrinking, ignorance of global issues and national perspectives is foolish and even dangerous.

### **The Existence of a Multiethnic Society**

Today, more than 40 percent of this society's school-age children are ethnic minorities.<sup>19</sup> Current patterns of immigration, particularly with the influx of people from Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, ensure that ethnic pluralism will continue to be the American way in the foreseeable future. It is estimated that nearly 40 percent of this nation's school-age children live in low-income families, with 19 percent at or below the poverty level.<sup>20</sup> Given the extensive research indicating that disproportionately high numbers of ethnic minority and low-income students are dropping out of school or are being suspended or expelled and that disproportionately high numbers of those who do remain in school are achieving far below their potential, teachers today face a tremendous challenge. If these patterns are to be reversed, schools must affirm cultural diversity. Multicultural schools would obviously be better equipped to deal with the complexities of a pluralistic society than are the traditional monocultural schools. Schools based on the ideal of cultural pluralism, as in culturally competent teaching discussed in Chapter 10, represent a compromise between cultural assimilation on the one hand and cultural separatism or segregation on the other.

Those who believe that cultural pluralism will heighten ethnic group identity and lead to separatism, intergroup antagonism, and fragmentation consider it to be dangerous to society. However, cultural pluralism seems possible in a nation such as the United States because it is, from a non-Native-American perspective, a nation of (voluntary and involuntary) immigrants.<sup>21</sup> With the exception of American Indians and certain segments of the Latino population, land is not an issue in ethnic identity for most groups. In contrast to those areas of the world where cultural pluralism has resulted in fragmentation—for example, portions of Europe and the former Soviet Union—many ethnic groups in the United States have contributed to the development of the predominant culture or were immersed in an already existing dominant culture when they arrived.<sup>22</sup>

Clearly, our schools are faced with educating a culturally pluralistic population. Pluralistic schools can identify baseline expectations for learning and behavior that are expected of all students. Every attempt must be made to lessen the cultural conflict that may result from cultural bias at this baseline. Some groups may perceive certain rules as culturally biased, such as the prohibition of hats (a yarmulke) in a school serving Orthodox Jews or unexcused absences during religious holidays. The scheduling of extracurricular activities after school discourages students who travel to school by bus, and certain school traditions, such as team names and colors, school emblems, and yearbook titles, may also symbolize the preeminence of a particular group.

By the year 2020, children of color will exceed 45 percent of the school-age population in the United States.



Fotolia.

### The Existence of an Interconnected World

It is urgent that we foster global awareness among today's children and youth. The human race faces a number of critical concerns that if left unresolved are likely to result in the destruction of life as we know it: destruction of the ozone layer, environmental pollution, poverty, overpopulation, nuclear arms, drought and famine and world hunger, and the spread of AIDS and other diseases. The resolution of these problems, as well as participation in global trade and economic development, require global cooperation. This cooperation requires human beings who possess some degree of cross-cultural understanding.

The urgency of teaching about the state of the planet and of developing responsible world citizens was expressed over three decades ago by Robert Muller, Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations and International Youth Year (1985). When they become adults, he argued, today's children will face global problems related to war and peace, access to food, distribution of the world's natural resources, economic issues, and the overall quality of life. As adults, whether they are beneficiaries or victims on the world stage, they will have the right to ask why they were not better educated about global interdependence and the role they can play as a member of the human race. Muller argued that nations have the duty to properly educate their children about world problems and that it is in their best interest to do so.<sup>23</sup>

All of us are participants in the global arena. It is unavoidable. The question is the degree to which this participation is informed and enlightened.

## Equity, Democratic Values, and “Every Day” Social Justice

Finally, equity is not only a matter of bettering our country’s educational system. It is required if we value this nation’s democratic ideals: basic human rights, social justice, respect for alternative life choices, and equal opportunity for all. Making reality fit these ideals, however, is not always easy. Reconciling the differences between these democratic ideals and the realities of social injustices in our society has been a concern for decades. Gunnar Myrdal, the famous Swedish social scientist who studied American society during the 1940s, saw American race relations as a moral dilemma. This “American Dilemma” was rooted in conflict between the ideals of the American Creed found in the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble of the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, and the realities of race relations in American society.<sup>24</sup> In the end, Myrdal predicted, the dilemma would be resolved with the attainment of racial equality.

It is ideally un-American to be racist or sexist, for example, but because many teachers fear teaching about values or changing attitudes, they ignore the issues of prejudice and discrimination. Multicultural education, in contrast, confronts the fact that this is a racist society with a history of White supremacy and privilege. An effective curriculum would point out that White racism has greatly influenced how people perceive, evaluate, believe, and act—and that this legacy persists. Because its aim is to reduce the ignorance that breeds racism and to develop the understanding and actions people need to become antiracist, multicultural education can help overcome barriers to achieving our ideals.

Democratic principles are at the heart of many issues addressed by multicultural education, such as the struggle for minority rights in a society based on majority rule, the right to dissent, and the limits of free speech. Multicultural classrooms nurture freedom of expression, the search for truth, and fair-minded critical thinking, but they are not value free. For example, multicultural advocates affirm fairness in the allocation of scarce positions and national resources and the elimination of economic exploitation, as well as the end of cultural exploitation and “assimilationist models of citizenship.”<sup>25</sup>



## Conditions for Multicultural Schools: What Are They?

Under what conditions do students benefit from desegregated schooling? Most desegregated schools were forced to do so before this question was answered. The assumption over the past quarter-century seems to have been that segregated schools are inherently bad and desegregated schools inherently good.

To the degree that segregated schools foster unwarranted fears, misconceptions, and negative stereotypes between isolated groups, in addition to unequal educational opportunities, this assumption is correct. It is false, however, to assume that simply desegregating a school will eliminate these inherent problems. Both research and casual observation in the vast majority of desegregated schools document the existence of resegregation through formal practices such as tracking, grouping, and scheduling of extracurricular activities and through informal practices such as student seating preferences in classrooms and cafeterias. Many desegregated schools face the problems of racial tension, apathy, and absenteeism

as a reaction to forced busing and desegregation. All these conditions mitigate against personal growth and achievement among students.

Unfortunately, there has rarely been time for thoughtful consideration of the question: Under what conditions do students benefit from desegregated schooling? In most U.S. schools, teachers, students, and administrators have been forced to desegregate without the help of guidelines to establish good race relations and academic achievement among minority and majority students alike. Nevertheless, answers to the question do exist. The purpose of this section of the chapter is to provide a synthesis of important, but not widely used, concepts and theories that hold promise for school desegregation and to suggest guidelines for effective desegregation in a variety of settings.

The focus will be on the urban setting, which typically has involved racial desegregation. Urban desegregation highlights the process that occurs unrecognized in many other school settings where race may not be a factor. Numerous possibilities come to mind: rural versus urban, labor versus management, wealthy versus poor, military versus civilian, Christian versus non-Christian, Polish American versus Italian American, and town versus gown.

### **Integration: Not Resegregation**

There are at least four possible ways schools can respond to school desegregation: business-as-usual, assimilation, pluralistic coexistence, and integrated pluralism. These possible responses have been identified and described by H. A. Sagar and J. W. Schofield, as a result of their research in desegregated schools.<sup>26</sup>

#### *The Business-as-Usual School Response to Desegregation*

Multiracial schools that greet desegregation with “business as usual” keep the same basic curriculum, academic standards, and teaching methods that existed when the school was segregated. Moreover, the previous priorities in terms of values, appropriate student behavior, and discipline policies are maintained. “These schools do not see themselves as having to adjust their traditional practices in order to handle the new student body. Rather, the students are expected to adjust to the school.”<sup>27</sup> This type of response does not consider whether old rules or procedures are desirable when the nature of the student population has changed.

#### *The Assimilationist School Response*

The assimilationist response is compatible with the business-as-usual approach to desegregation because it assumes that

*(I)ntegration will have been achieved when the minority group can no longer be differentiated from the white majority in terms of economic status, education, or access to social institutions and their benefits. This will be accomplished by fostering a “color-blind” attitude where prejudice once reigned...and by imparting to minority persons the skills and value orientations which will enable them to take their place in the currently white-dominated social structure.... No significant change is anticipated since the newly assimilated minority individuals will be attitudinally and behaviorally indistinguishable from the majority. Stated in its boldest form, the assimilationist charge to the schools is to make minority children more like white children.<sup>28</sup>*

Students who do not assimilate are resegregated into separate tracks or programs, drop out, or are suspended or expelled. The fact that students' race and culture may make a difference in students' and teachers' perceptions of each other and expectations about appropriate classroom behavior is not considered. The assimilationist response is often based on an erroneous assumption that to recognize race is to be racist.

Schools that desegregate with the business-as-usual or assimilation response appear similar. The subtle difference is that under the assimilation response the host school makes a *conscious* decision about what is expected of new students. In contrast, desegregating schools that take the business-as-usual approach proceed as they have in the past and appear to *unconsciously* expect all new students to fit in.

### *The Pluralistic Coexistence School Response*

Like the business-as-usual and assimilation responses, pluralistic coexistence also involves resegregation. But in contrast to business-as-usual and the assimilation response, where only those students who do not fit in are resegregated, pluralistic coexistence is based on the intentional separation of different racial or ethnic groups. Students are allowed to maintain different styles and values, but within a school environment consisting of separate turfs for different racial groups. Typically, there are different schools within a school, and little or no attempt is made to encourage students to mix. Describing one such school that was previously all-White, Sagar and Schofield write,

*The principal tolerated almost complete informal re-segregation of the students, to the point where there were considered to be "two schools within a school." The school's annex, for example, became known as a black area, or the "recreational study hall," while the library served as a white area, or "non-recreational study hall."*<sup>29</sup>

In this school the African American principal tried to appease White parents by maintaining advanced academic programs to prevent them from withdrawing their children, who had become the minority. Within this school situation, separate was clearly unequal.

### *The Integrated Pluralism School Response*

Genuine integration is most likely to happen in schools that use the idea of integrated pluralism as their goal for desegregation. In contrast to business-as-usual and assimilation, as well as to pluralistic coexistence, integrated pluralism actively seeks to avoid the resegregation of students. This approach to school desegregation is pluralistic because it recognizes and affirms the diverse ethnic groups in the school and society beyond; deviations from White middle-class patterns of behavior are not denigrated. Instead,

*Integrated pluralism affirms the equal value of the school's various ethnic groups, encouraging their participation, not on majority-defined terms, but in an evolving system which reflects the contributions of all groups.... It is integrationist in the sense that it affirms the educational value inherent in exposing all students to a diversity of perspectives and behavioral repertoires and the social value of structuring the school so that students from previously isolated and even hostile groups can come to know each other under conditions conducive to the development of positive intergroup relations.*

*Integrated pluralism takes an activist stance in trying to foster interaction between different groups of students rather than accepting re-segregation as either desirable or inevitable.*<sup>30</sup>

Student interaction in the school cafeteria is an indicator of integration.



Fotolia.

The first three responses are obviously unacceptable. Integrated pluralism, the last response, is the goal to strive for. Desegregation per se, or merely mixing formerly isolated ethnic groups in the same school, does not go far enough. Integration, however, recognizes and accommodates all the groups that were formerly segregated—in other words, it creates the conditions for cultural pluralism.

More than half a century ago, noted Black sociologist W. E. B. DuBois wrote about the issues of segregated versus desegregated schools:

*A mixed school with poor and unsympathetic teachers, with hostile public opinion, and no teaching of truth concerning black folk, is bad. A segregated school with ignorant placeholders, inadequate equipment, poor salaries, and wretched housing, is equally bad. Other things being equal, the mixed school is the broader, more natural basis for the education of all youth. It gives wider contacts; it inspires greater self-confidence; and suppresses the inferiority complex. But other things seldom are equal, and in that case, Sympathy, Knowledge, and Truth, outweigh all that the mixed school can offer.<sup>31</sup>*

The philosophy of DuBois lends powerful support to the case for multicultural schools. Teachers must be free of racial prejudice and ethnocentrism (the belief that one's own culture is superior to all others) if they are to be effective with students of diverse cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Although prejudice and ethnocentrism seem to be part of the human condition, teachers should be less prejudiced and ethnocentric than the average person.

Research on the characteristics of effectively integrated schools shows that a policy consistent with integrated pluralism has the best potential for encouraging good race relations, academic achievement, and personal development among students. Four necessary conditions underlie the integrated pluralism response: positive

teacher expectations, a learning environment that encourages positive intergroup contact, culturally competent teaching, and a multicultural curriculum.<sup>32</sup>

### Positive Teacher Expectations

Teachers often make snap judgments, based on their perceptions, about students and go on to treat them differently. Many teachers interact with students differently according to the student's race and socioeconomic status. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot has aptly referred to teachers as "judges of deviance."

Much has been written about the power of teacher expectations. Research also supports the basic assumption that teacher attitudes influence student achievement. One of the first studies, and probably best known, is the controversial study by Rosenthal and Jacobson, who reported their success in influencing student achievement by giving teachers phony data about their students.<sup>33</sup> Approximately 20 percent of the student population, selected at random, were identified as "bloomers" on an intelligence test. Teachers were given the names of these supposedly high-potential students, to be held in confidence, and these students did indeed achieve at significantly higher levels than their classmates. Although some scholars question the methodology used in this study, even its critics accept the notion that teacher expectations often affect student achievement.

Decades of research since this study "leads to a consensus that teachers' expectations can and sometimes do affect teacher-student interaction and student outcomes; however, the processes are much more complex than originally believed."<sup>34</sup> One conclusion, for example, is that teacher beliefs and expectations interact with student beliefs and behaviors. To the extent that ethnicity influences behaviors and beliefs, it is a factor in teacher expectations. Only a few recent studies have focused on ethnicity, however, although several researchers in the 1970s and early 1980s did so.

In one follow-up to Rosenthal and Jacobson's "Pygmalion" study, social studies student teachers were asked by their university supervisors to rank their students from high to low in terms of academic ability after two days in the classroom.<sup>35</sup> The student teachers did so without expressing uncertainty or difficulty. During the semester, their university supervisors coded their interactions with the high and low students. Results showed that lows were less frequently encouraged to participate in class discussion or to interact with the teacher, either directly by being called on or indirectly by receiving extended teacher feedback when they volunteered. Teachers tended to neglect the students they rated low.

In another study involving student teachers, all White females, the women were asked to teach a comparable current events lesson to a biracial group of students.<sup>36</sup> Each was given a class roster that contained phony IQ data for each student. High and low IQs were distributed at random, but evenly for Black and White students. Classroom observers recorded no significant difference in student behavior during the lesson, but the student teachers perceived the bright African American students as more hostile and disruptive. A likely explanation is that these student teachers felt threatened by students who did not fit their expectations (that is, they were not expecting a group of African American students who were also bright).

A growing body of evidence indicates that many White teachers have lower expectations for their non-White students. In one Midwestern study of high school student discipline in two large urban school corporations, for example, teachers who responded to an anonymous questionnaire felt Black students had less innate potential than White students on every variable, except basketball (where Blacks were perceived as having equal potential). Other variables included band, orchestra, drama, and scholastics.<sup>37</sup>

Another study of classroom interaction in forty-one middle school classrooms showed that when teachers have equal achievement expectations for Black and White students there is more interracial friendship and interaction among the students. A classroom climate of acceptance among students was more likely to exist when teachers did not distinguish between the learning potential of Black and White students.<sup>38</sup> Other studies have shown that a classroom climate of acceptance is related to increased student achievement, especially among minorities in the classroom.

Studies by Gay, Rist, and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission have shown that many teachers have lower expectations for African American and Mexican American students.<sup>39</sup> In the Rist study, which involved Black teachers and students, the teacher had lower expectations for the darker-skinned children. All three studies showed that teachers interacted with low-expectation students in intellectually limiting ways and were more supportive and stimulating with their White or light-skinned students.

Given the fact that teacher expectations can and do influence student achievement, and given the fact that many teachers hold lower expectations for African American and Latino students, is integrated education possible? I believe it is. Not all administrators, teachers, and students are racially prejudiced and not all have low expectations. Therefore, racial prejudice is not necessary to the human condition. Many teachers, administrators, and students who are racially prejudiced can develop the kinds of understanding required to become less so. This is a major goal of multicultural education among adults.

Lower teacher expectations for particular racial or ethnic groups are based on negative racial or ethnic prejudice. Teachers, like all people, often are not aware of their prejudices; thus they may not be aware of their lower expectations for some students.

A major theme in this book is the belief that if teachers are to have equally positive expectations for students of all ethnic backgrounds, they must understand the cultural differences that often exist in the desegregated classroom. The fact that cultural differences frequently are associated with racial differences often confirms myths and stereotypes associated with race. Teachers need guidelines, such as the Aspects of Ethnicity discussed in Chapter 2, to help them observe and interpret culturally different behavior. Such guidelines can help prevent blanket assumptions that certain behaviors and values go with certain racial groups.

### **A Learning Environment That Supports Positive Interracial Contact**

Too often, we simply bring together groups of students who share different histories and hope for the best. The best rarely happens. Casual contact between different ethnic groups may reinforce existing negative stereotypes or generate new ones.

I observed this phenomenon in a kindergarten classroom in a Florida school district during its initial attempts at desegregation. As the school year began, White students, most of whom had already had several years of nursery school, could be found busily working in one of the higher-ability achievement groups. Their African American classmates, who had been bused from across town and had not had preparatory nursery school experience, ran wildly around the room until they could be settled into one of the remedial or lower achievement groups. White parents who advocated school desegregation were dismayed by their children's negative reports. For many of these White kindergartners, initial contact with Black children appeared to be creating negative racial prejudices. For most of the African American kindergartners, the vicious cycle of low expectations and low academic achievement was beginning.

Scenes like this can be avoided when school policies and practices are guided by social contact theory. In 1954, the year of the landmark school desegregation decision, Gordon Allport first published his theory of positive intergroup contact. He summarized his theory as follows:

*Given a population of ordinary people, with a normal degree of prejudice, we are safe in making the following general prediction: Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and if it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups.<sup>40</sup>*

It is unlikely that the young children described in this scene harbored deep-seated racial prejudice. If this is also true for the teacher, classroom practices can be implemented to encourage academic achievement and good race relations. Social contact theory provides a framework that can help educators identify policy guidelines for effective school desegregation, as well as promising practices that have been uncovered by recent research in desegregated schools.

According to contact theorists, at least four basic conditions are necessary if social contact between groups is to lessen negative prejudice and lead to friendly attitudes and behaviors:

1. Contact should be sufficiently intimate to produce reciprocal knowledge and understanding between groups.
2. Members of various groups must share equal status.
3. The contact situation should lead people to do things together. It should require intergroup cooperation to achieve a common goal.
4. There must be institutional support—an authority and/or social climate that encourages intergroup contact.<sup>41</sup>

These four conditions of positive social contact can be used as guidelines for observing desegregated schools and for detecting problem areas. One of the most difficult conditions for most schools to establish is an equal status environment for the different racial groups within the student body. Often there are sharp socioeconomic differences, as well as differences in the initial achievement levels of Black and

How a school responds to court-ordered desegregation is critical in the development of equitable, effective learning environments.



Fotolia.

White classmates. Tracking and grouping practices may be viewed as necessary, but they may also lead to resegregation. A history of racial discrimination in education and hiring practices means schools often face a limited pool of available Black and Latino administrators and teachers who can serve as high-status role models.

Other potential violations of the conditions of positive intergroup contact stem from school rules, discipline practices, extracurricular activities, and symbols and traditions. Some rules are perceived as inequitable (for example, prohibition of “bad language” and hats). Scheduling extracurricular activities after school excludes students who travel by bus and limits opportunities for intergroup contact in co-curricular activities. School traditions often become a problem during initial stages of desegregation and act as symbolic indicators of where the school’s authority stands on integrated pluralism.

*If “new” students come to an “old” school, there is a frequent tendency for both racial groups to perceive the school as “belonging” to the “old” group. The school name, team nicknames, school songs, and titles of school publications are a few of the many symbols that may symbolize preeminence of a particular racial group. There are other, more subtle, customs that may symbolize segregation in ways not anticipated. If editors have always been college preparatory students, and there are few college preparatory students in the “new” group, continuation of the tradition will symbolize unequal status.... “Preserving traditions” can be a euphemism for “putting minorities in their place.” Opposition to integration may focus on defense of symbols. When this happens, school personnel need to realize what is happening and deal with reality.<sup>42</sup>*

Underlying these relatively visible concerns is a hidden problem: a mutual lack of knowledge about communication modes, values, and perceptions among culturally different students and teachers, which often leads to misunderstanding and conflict.

For example, many White teachers and students are unknowingly ignorant about the structures and meanings of Ebonics, African American vernacular. The double negative “ain’t got no” may signify a “low-class,” uneducated person, while use of the term “nigger” among Blacks may be viewed by Whites as insulting or threatening. Black students, on the other hand, might regard all Whites as racist and interpret the behaviors of White teachers and classmates from that perspective. As long as students and teachers are left to their own devices, there is little opportunity for the kind of intimate contact between culturally different students that could foster mutual understanding. Informal segregation is typically the rule throughout the school.

Let’s look at two examples of desegregation in action. Although they took place several decades ago, they ring true today, as shown in the 2005 book by Stephen J. Caldas and Carl L. Bankston, *Forced to Fail: The Paradox of School Desegregation*.



## The Example of Marcia Patton

Marcia Patton is the twelve-year-old daughter of Mavis and Lew Patton, two politically active lawyers who practice law in a large midwestern city. Marcia is in the first group of White children to attend Jefferson Junior High School, traditionally a school for inner-city Blacks. Although most of the children in her neighborhood attend a high-powered prep school, Marcia’s parents are sending her to Jefferson on principle.

On her second day at Jefferson, Marcia clutched her books tightly to her chest as she entered Ms. Samson’s language arts class. The teacher smiled as she greeted Marcia. She stepped into the hall to speak with several noisy students who were scrambling around the drinking fountain.

At that moment five classmates burst into the room. They slammed their books down on the desk and crowded around Marcia.

Most of the students were very friendly to her. Several offered to take her to the cafeteria at lunch. Marcia became uncomfortable with the attention when one classmate handled her braids and another swatted them out of the offending student’s hands shouting, “Let her hair alone!”

That evening Marcia wrote a letter to Ms. Bryant, her teacher last year, in the secrecy of her bedroom.

“When I first walked in, I saw all these dark faces and for the first time I felt so White. There was nothing but laughing, noisy, dark-skinned faces. My heart was beating so fast I thought I would drop dead for sure. I guess a lot of them won’t like me. Still, most of the kids are real nice to me. But even so, I’m scared. Everyone is so loud and sometimes they get so close I can hardly breathe.

“The teachers are real nice to me but I wish Ms. Samson wouldn’t call on me so much. We use the book we used in your class last year, and lots of the kids in the class can’t read it.

“I’ve been there over a week now and was feeling better until today. A horrible thing happened and I can’t tell anybody but you.

“I went to the bathroom after lunch, and two girls I don’t know told me to give them all my money or they would hurt me. I gave them twelve dollars, all I had. They said they’d slash my face if I told anybody. I’m afraid to go back.”



## The Example of Isaac Washington

Isaac Washington is a junior at Jefferson Davis High School, a school known for its academic excellence and located near a burgeoning metropolis in Texas. Having entered Davis High as a freshman, Isaac is among the first group of Black students to attend the school in response to a school desegregation court order.

Isaac had attended elementary and junior high schools in the African American community. He and his friends had expected to enroll in George Washington High School, an outstanding all-Black educational facility with a national reputation. For decades, Washington High School had provided a nurturing learning environment that encouraged academic excellence and fostered personal ambition and self-confidence among the student population, many of whom became successful in business, the arts, and the professions. The school was shut down three years ago, despite pleading and protest from the African American community, and its student body was distributed throughout the previously all-White schools. This was done so that the incoming Black students would not exceed 10 to 15 percent of the host school student population. Most of these students face a lengthy bus ride at the beginning and end of each school day, and most can remember the anger and resentment expressed by members of the White community who opposed their presence in the school. Sports and other extracurricular activities scheduled after school have become impossible because of the long bus ride home.

In contrast to most of his former classmates from Washington High School, who were placed in the low-ability tracks, Isaac's classes are in the advanced placement and honors sections. Although he excels in all of his classes, his new school experience weighs heavily on him. Most of his close friends have dropped out of school, even the ones who had thrived in elementary and junior high school, and he is experiencing tensions with old friends in the neighborhood.

At school he is uncomfortable being the only African American in most of his classes. The phenomenon of all-eyes-upon-him whenever a Black writer is studied, for example, or a civil rights issue is discussed is a daily occurrence that he feels he will never get used to. And then there are the insults and racial slurs that constantly occur and seem incurable.

The case of Isaac Washington portrays the unfair burden African American schoolchildren and their families have borne in the struggle to desegregate U.S. schools. Typically, though not always, it is the Black children who are bused farthest from home into areas that are unfamiliar and sometimes hostile: it is the Black children who have to adjust to new school expectations, sometimes numerous times in a single school career; it is the Black community that is forced to give up its schools and all of the history, symbols, and traditions these schools represent.

White children from middle- and upper-income backgrounds can also find it difficult to adjust to new schools. Thrust into a desegregated setting, they often misinterpret and are misunderstood, and they are sometimes fearful and vulnerable.

Marcia's situation, that of being one of a few White students in a predominantly African American urban school, is a reversal of what many Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian children often face. Marcia's situation is complicated by the fact that her parents are using her to act in accordance with their belief in school desegregation. Liberal White parents are frequently criticized for not sending their children to inner-city schools.

Students in this school situation may require a good deal of emotional support. Marcia is afraid of disappointing her parents; she confuses her fears and anxieties about her classmates with being racist and thus is unable to confide in her parents.

Although most of the African American students are willing to accept Marcia and try to make her feel welcome, there are some students who will take out their anger and frustration on her. Because she is a symbol of what they believe to be White oppression, her safety is threatened.

Social contact theory can be used as a guide to alleviate obstacles experienced by students like Isaac Washington and Marcia Patton. Although visions of integrated schools may differ, there are at least two necessary observable characteristics. First, there is a relaxed interracial mixing among the majority of students and teachers in casual and informal settings at school. Second, there is real academic achievement and personal growth among all students, as seen in formal course work and extra-curricular activities. These two characteristics appear to be interactive. Where good race relations exist, student achievement is higher, and the reverse is also true.

There is no standard recipe for integrating the desegregated school. Neither are there specific requisite practices. There are, however, necessary conditions for positive intergroup contact (equal status, knowledge, cooperation, and institutional support) that schools can use as a guide in making decisions about specific desegregation practices. For example, some form of ability grouping might be appropriate in creating an equal-status environment in one school but not in another. What is important is that ability groups do not produce racially visible differences and do not limit the opportunities for low-income students.

Research by scholars such as the late Elizabeth Cohen suggests ways of creating equal status among racially different students who bring differing entry-level skills to the classroom.<sup>43</sup> In one study, Cohen provided special instruction to lower achievers before their participation in small-group cooperative learning. The lower achievers could then make unique contributions to their group, which helped equalize their classroom status. Furthermore, achievement and interracial friendship were enhanced.

A study conducted by Garlie Forehand and Marjorie Ragosta focused on school characteristics of effectively desegregated schools.<sup>44</sup> They defined effectiveness in terms of student achievement and race relations. Data were collected from tests, questionnaires, and interviews in nearly 200 schools. All the schools were racially mixed and represented a wide range of socioeconomic, demographic, and geographic conditions.

The results identified school conditions under which benefits in integrated education were maximized in a wide variety of settings, sometimes even where large

socioeconomic differences existed within the student population. In their *Handbook for Integrated Schooling*, which developed from their findings, the researchers have presented a number of practices that characterize effectively desegregated schools. Table 1.3 presents an overview of these and other research findings and shows their relationship with the conditions of positive intergroup contact.

Other research shows that biracial work and play teams among students are one of the most powerful ways to improve race relations. As seen in Table 1.3, this practice meets the four conditions of positive intergroup contact. One promising strategy that builds on this fact is team learning, an approach developed by Robert Slavin and his associates at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at the

 **Table 1.3** Strategies for School Integration: Summary of Research Findings

<i>School Practice</i>	<i>Shows Conditions of Positive Intergroup Contact that</i>			
	<i>Create Equal Status</i>	<i>Lead to Interpersonal Acquaintance</i>	<i>Are Based on Common Goal</i>	<i>Show Institutional Support</i>
Multiethnic curriculum	✓	✓		✓
Extracurricular activities scheduled during school day	✓	✓	✓	✓
Open discussion of race and racial issues in classroom		✓		✓
Biracial work and play teams among students	✓	✓	✓	✓
Biracial seating patterns		✓		✓
Rules and discipline: equal punishment for equal offense	✓			✓
Equitable rules (If punishment for the infraction of a rule appears to be associated with race, determine whether the rule is equitable.)	✓			✓
Academic achievement and good race relations established as explicit goals				✓
Biracial staffing that reflects school's racial composition	✓			✓
Biracial staffing in high-status positions				✓
Student-focused human relations activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Class and program assignments that do not result in racially identifiable groups	✓	✓		✓
Individualized instruction that rewards improvement as well as academic absolutes	✓			✓

Johns Hopkins University. Team learning can help establish an equal-status environment among students who bring different entry skills to the classroom because the tasks can be designed to fit student strengths. (Team learning is examined in Chapter 11.)

### **Culturally Competent Teaching**

Given the cultural and racial complexities of contemporary society in the United States, as well as the disproportionate number of students of color and low-income students who are being left behind in our schools, we need teachers who are both culturally competent and antiracist. Equity pedagogy, a major dimension of multicultural education, as defined on page 4, is needed in schools across the heartland as much as in our inner cities. Culturally incompetent teachers, especially those unable to work with English language learners, or teachers who are unable to counter institutional racism in both its hidden and overt forms cannot implement it.

The need for culturally competent teachers was recently addressed by one of the writing teams working with the Educator Standards Board in the State of Ohio.<sup>45</sup> The team defined cultural competence as the teacher's ability to see different cultural heritages, including languages, as assets. Culturally competent teachers create learning communities that affirm their students' cultural and individual differences and build connections between home and school experiences in their use of literature, images, and language. Moreover, these teachers challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination, serving as change agents to address all forms of societal inequities.<sup>46</sup>

Although this definition was not included in the final document adopted by the Ohio Board of Education in 2005, it has inspired others who are writing about racial and cultural competence in the classroom.<sup>47</sup> It also captures a central message within the four chapters in Part III that focus on individual learning styles and the promise of culturally competent teaching; reaching all learners, with perspectives on gender, class and special needs; teaching in linguistically diverse classrooms; and curriculum transformation.

### **A Multicultural Curriculum**

Curriculum can be viewed as the experiences, both official and unofficial, that learners have under the auspices of the school. Following this definition, a multicultural curriculum is one that attends to the school's hidden curriculum—for example, teachers' values and expectations, student cliques and peer groupings, and school regulations. It also attends to the values, cultural styles, knowledge, and perceptions that all students bring to the school. A multicultural curriculum, in its broadest sense, influences the total school environment. Curriculum transformation, the topic for Chapter 13, will focus on planned experiences in school that are intended to

develop student understandings, values, attitudes, and behaviors related to six goals of multicultural education:

1. Understanding Multiple Historical Perspectives
2. Developing Cultural Consciousness
3. Developing Intercultural Competence
4. Combating Racism, Sexism, and All Forms of Prejudice and Discrimination
5. Raising Awareness of the State of the Planet and Global Dynamics
6. Developing Social Action Skills

Multicultural content could extend, enrich, and perhaps even transform state and national content standards across the curriculum. With clarification of multicultural goals it becomes possible to connect them with curriculum standards, as is illustrated in Chapter 13.

A multicultural curriculum cannot come to life unless fair-minded critical thinking is at the heart of teaching and learning. Both teachers and their students must become critical thinkers who can “gather, analyze, synthesize, and assess information, enter sympathetically into the thinking of others, . . . [and] deal rationally with conflicting points of view.”<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, a multicultural curriculum requires that teachers and students genuinely care about human welfare beyond themselves, their family, and their friends. And, finally, it requires a focus on community action so that teachers and students can become agents of change. But without critical thinking and teaching at the center, multicultural education is likely to result in indoctrination rather than ethical insights based on core values.



## The Critics of Multicultural Education

*Multicultural education* is a loaded term. It conjures up images of ethnic divisiveness and conflict, biased revisionism in history lessons, accusations about White racism, attacks on Christianity, disrespect for our nation’s democratic ideals, fluffy lessons about other cultures, reinforced stereotypes, and an endless array of diverse groups and identities that need to be considered. Many teachers and administrators are turned off by the mere mention of the phrase, as are some academic scholars, even in history and the social sciences, where one could argue multicultural education has a natural home. Why does multicultural education have a bad name in some circles? Misconceptions about what multicultural education looks like, *at its best*, is part of the reason. Let’s consider some of the main areas of criticism.<sup>49</sup>

### Potential for Conflict and Divisiveness

Critics worry that an emphasis on race and culture will be harmful to our national unity. They argue that the United States has developed a common culture that unifies its people by allowing everyone to shed their past and ethnic membership in order to think and speak as an individual American. Furthermore, they believe the attention contemporary minority group members are giving to ethnic origin also

promotes White guilt and national self-hatred. Western thought must be emphasized because it is the source of thought that allows individuals to rise above their origins. Other critics argue for only English to be taught in schools, and they perceive the maintenance of other first languages to be a threat to national unity.

### **Liberal Bias and Cultural Relativism**

Some conservative critics see multicultural education as a movement led by college professors, formerly radical protesters of the 1960s, who are on the political fringe with ideas such as affirmative action, gay rights, and a woman's right to choose in matters of health and reproduction. Some liberal critics argue that multiculturalism means excessive cultural relativism—the idea that all cultural practices are equally good, including torture, genocide, and the suppression of women's rights—and will lead to “moral anarchy” because there are no guiding principles or values to organize society. Other critics see a conflict between multicultural education and their religious beliefs. Still others criticize what they regard to be “politically correct trivia and dogma that replaces sound intellectual scholarship with shoddiness,” especially in university-level diversity courses and K–12 Afrocentric curricula.<sup>50</sup>

### **Superficial Conception of Culture**

Some critics note that many teachers (preschool through college) focus on surface culture, such as food, dress, crafts, literature, language, and festivals. They argue that students are not encouraged to get into the unspoken and unconscious rules of deep culture, such as concepts of courtesy, time, beauty, cleanliness, past and future, and so forth when studying about other cultures at home and around the world. Some comment that images of the melting pot (or sometimes of a soup or stew) to represent assimilation of ethnic groups, versus the salad bowl to represent a culturally pluralistic society, are trivial metaphors for complex social conditions. Still others criticize the false self-esteem building associated with feel-good lessons that focus on ethnic leaders and contributions but mask societal inequities. Others are critical when culture is viewed as static and essentialized, which leads to ethnic stereotypes and lists of cultural attributes associated with a specific ethnic group or nationality.

### **Co-option of Minorities**

Many critics of multicultural education believe that it emphasizes cross-cultural understanding and celebration but overlooks inequities in education and society. In their view, multicultural education ignores racism and rarely addresses issues of poverty in the United States, such as why people of color are overrepresented in poverty and what kinds of actions could be taken to bring about change. They believe that superficial attention to culture and ethnic heroes lulls parents and students of color into thinking significant changes in educational equity are taking place. Furthermore, these critics argue that this infusion of ethnic heroes and culture often works to drive a wedge between students and families of color and lower-income Whites, who also experience societal inequities and often feel alienated at school.

## What Do You Think?

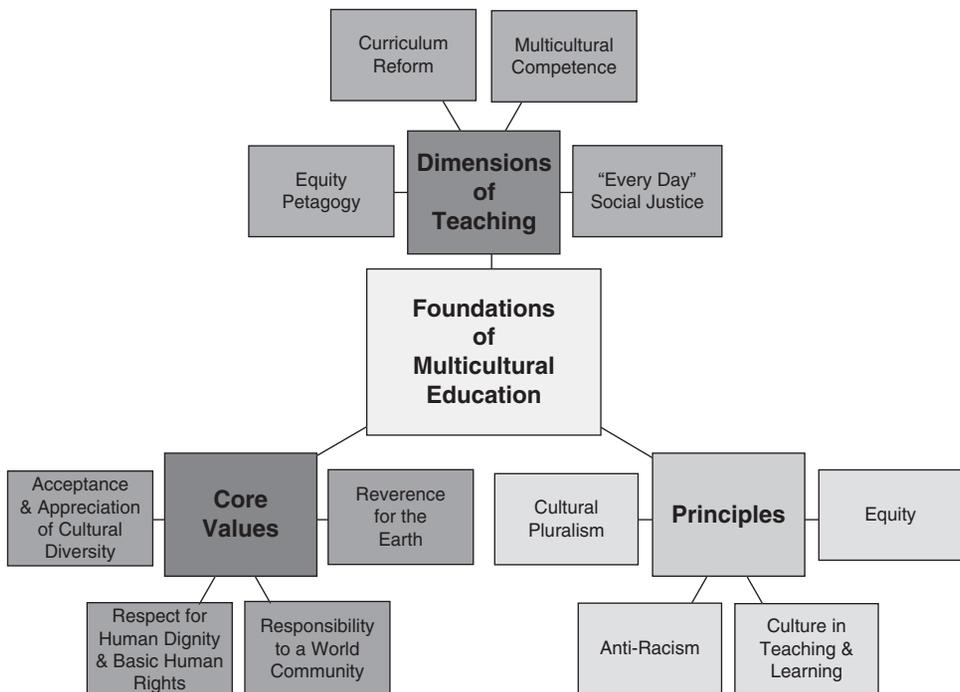
As you read over these criticisms, some may resonate with you. Which ones do you agree with most? And why? You may also be wondering, given all these criticisms of multicultural education, why read on? In the rest of this book, I will provide answers that I hope you will find encouraging.



## Conclusions

This chapter draws upon decades of work by scholars in the social sciences and multicultural education scholars to provide a foundation for defining multicultural education. It presents a conceptual framework that defines multicultural education in terms of four underlying principles, four dimensions of multicultural teaching, and four core values. Figure 1.2 provides a visual summary of this foundation.

The case for multicultural education presented in this chapter and throughout the book takes a position that may not be widely accepted. It could be viewed as overly idealistic and based on unrealistic assumptions about the possibilities for human altruism. It would be possible to develop an alternative, perhaps more negative, approach, one based on fear of human annihilation and concerns about the survival, health, and future of one's grandchildren. People become concerned about



**Figure 1.2** The Foundations of Multicultural Education

multicultural and global issues when the focus is on economic competition in the world arena, unsafe storage of nuclear wastes, the greenhouse effect, and futile military or diplomatic efforts based on ignorance of history and culture. Even the goal of combating racism, which has never been a national policy, could be viewed positively by perpetrators of racism once it is realized that economic and political gains in (or in cooperation with) Third World nations cannot be taken seriously as long as we practice racism at home and abroad.

The fact is, however, that the multicultural education movement *is* idealistic. It means learning to think through a “language of hope and possibility.”<sup>51</sup> Multicultural education is based on visions of humans living in greater harmony with each other and with the earth. It asks that we develop citizens who are able to consider alternative viewpoints, are able to examine values and assumptions (one’s own as well as those of others), and are willing to learn to think critically. It requires a degree of open-mindedness that may be impossible to develop in people with a highly rigid belief structure. This does not mean that the visions of multicultural education should be abandoned.

By clearly stating the goals and core values of multicultural education, it becomes possible to articulate reasons for disagreement. This can lead to a healthy dialogue, even among strong supporters, that can move us beyond theory and rhetoric into practice.

The concept of radical cultural relativism, or the notion that anything goes, is a frequently voiced concern. Many adults who have school-age children, for example, see multicultural education as requiring students to accept abhorrent sociopolitical practices. These objectionable practices may include news-making events such as the stifling of political dissenters within ethnic communities and physical violence such as female infanticide or the mutilation of the genitalia of young women. The goals and core values proposed in this chapter can help us deal with cultural relativism in at least three ways. First, if we accept respect for human dignity and universal human rights as a basic value, then we cannot be neutral about injury to or destruction of human life. Ultimately, the goal is for these practices to end. Second, if we consider multiple historical perspectives, we can at least understand why such practices do occur. And third, if we develop cultural consciousness and intercultural competence, we may be able to understand that we might very well accept and even participate in such behaviors had we been born and raised in that society.

Another important concern is that many nations, ethnic minorities, and economically disadvantaged people will not participate in multicultural education efforts. We know, for example, that Third World people who fear a continuation of Western racism and imperialism view multicultural and global education with suspicion. This is a sobering limitation. If we were to take seriously our own national creed of justice and equality for all and if combating racism were to become a national policy, this suspicion might be lessened.

### Compare and Contrast

1. Four principles and four dimensions of multicultural education\*
2. Equity and equality in education
3. School desegregation and school integration

4. Social contact theory and resegregation in schools
5. Arguments for and against multicultural education
6. Four core values of multicultural education and six goals of a multicultural curriculum\*

\*See sample answers in Appendix A, pages 459–461.

### Questions and Activities

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the core values suggested in this chapter? As you think about your own multicultural teaching, how might you revise them (if at all)? Explain.
2. When might racially segregated schools be better than integrated schools?
3. Imagine that you are teaching in a culturally pluralistic classroom where students are strangers to each other due to de facto segregation (different neighborhoods or housing patterns) and/or rural-urban-suburban distinctions. How can you use Allport's positive social contact theory as guidelines for your instructional decisions?
4. You have been asked to present a major address at the annual meeting of the Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research (SIETAR). This year's meeting is in Paris during the month of July. All of your expenses are paid, including a three-week European study tour with educators from around the world. Choose your topic: "The Case for Multicultural Education" or "The Case Against Multicultural Education." Plan a rigorous speech. (For an excellent early review of the critics of multicultural education, see Christine Sleeter, "An Analysis of the Critics of Multicultural Education," in James A. Banks and Cherry M. Banks, eds., *The Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, New York: MacMillan, 1995, pp. 81–94. This chapter includes references to the major critiques as well as Sleeter's commentary on the strengths and weakness of each. Update with more current reviews.)
5. Think about your personal history in terms your past experiences with people from different racial groups. Consider your earliest memory of an interracial incident and also your most recent interracial contact experience. Memories can be recorded and shared in small and large groups.
6. Under what conditions can school desegregation lead to positive race relations among students and staff? According to social contact theorists, at least four basic conditions are necessary if contact between different isolated groups is to lessen negative prejudice and lead to friendly attitudes and behaviors. These conditions are listed below. As you read each one, note current practices in your school or classroom that would impede the development of that condition (negative practice) as well as practices that would help establish it (positive practices). Finally, note practices not in use that could be implemented to help build the condition in your school or classroom (possibilities).

- a. Contact should be sufficiently intimate to engender knowledge and mutual understanding between different ethnic or racial groups that have been isolated from each other.

Negative Practices	Positive Practices	Possibilities
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____

- b. Members of the various ethnic groups should share equal status.

Negative Practices	Positive Practices	Possibilities
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____

- c. The contact situation leads people to do things together; it requires intergroup cooperation to achieve a common goal.

Negative Practices	Positive Practices	Possibilities
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____

- d. There is institutional support expressed by an authority and/or social climate that encourage intergroup contact.

Negative Practices	Positive Practices	Possibilities
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____

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## Notes

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9. *Ibid.*
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  51. I am grateful to Bradley Levinson, a colleague at Indiana University, for bringing this phrase to my attention.