

Chapter Two: Defining Multicultural Education for School Reform

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW Why School Reform?

- I. A Definition of Multicultural Education
- II. Multicultural Education Is Antiracist Education
- III. Multicultural Education Is Basic Education
- IV. Multicultural Education Is Important For All Students
- V. Multicultural Education Is Pervasive
- VI. Multicultural Education Is Education for Social Justice
- VII. Multicultural Education Is a Process
- VIII. Multicultural Education Is Critical Pedagogy
 - a. *Defining Critical Pedagogy*
 - b. *Some Examples: The Content of the Curriculum*
 - c. *Critical Pedagogy in Action*

In Chapter Two:

Defining Multicultural Education for School Reform, Nieto provides a comprehensive definition of multicultural education. Nieto's definition emphasizes school reform as a way of promoting democratic practices of teaching and learning within the sociopolitical context of schooling. It has seven characteristics. Multicultural education is *antiracist, basic education, important for all students, pervasive, education for social justice, a process, and critical pedagogy*. This chapter explores each facet of multicultural education, focusing on praxis – knowledge, reflection, and action. Multicultural education is transformative through the basic principles of respect, critical thinking, social justice, and affirming the multiple identities, cultures, languages, and experiences of all students.

PROBLEM POSING

1. Why are there profound misunderstandings of multicultural education?
2. Why is school reform an essential element of school reform?
3. School reform is an essential component of multicultural education, but many teachers think of multicultural curriculum as human relations, sensitivity trainings, units about ethnic holidays, education in inner-city schools, or food festivals. Why is this the common perception?

4. What are the four potential conflicts and inequities that multicultural education helps to address?
5. Describe the ways “multicultural education can offer hope for real change” (p.31).
6. Although major theorists over the past 40 years consistently identified the goals, purposes, and reasons for multicultural education, why is it that one definition cannot capture all of its complexities?
7. According to Nieto’s definition, what is an essential emphasis of multicultural education?
8. What is Nieto’s definition of multicultural education?
9. What are Nieto’s seven characteristics of multicultural education?
10. How is multicultural education antiracist and antidiscriminatory?
11. Why must multicultural education be *consciously antiracist*?
12. What does Michelle Fine mean by “fear of naming” (p. 33)?
13. Describe what Nieto means by “sanitizing” the curriculum.
14. Use Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to describe how education makes our American heroes “safe”? Why is Lincoln “safe”? Why is Nat Turner “unsafe”?
15. What is meant when Jonathan Kozol’s process of “tailoring” those who have fought for social justice?
16. Why must anti-racists work affirmatively to combat racism?
17. What are some of the reasons that race is seldom mentioned in school?
18. Why is Beverly Tatum’s work about discussing race and racism within the framework of racial and cultural identity theory so groundbreaking?
19. Why is it difficult for some teachers engage with the topic of race?
20. What are some reasons why schools are reluctant to teach about issues of racism or discrimination?
21. How is multicultural education “basic” education?
22. What is multicultural literacy?
23. What is the alternative to multicultural education?
24. Who is generally represented in the “canon”?
25. What are the profound multicultural questions that educators should ask?
26. Why is multicultural education important for *all* students?
27. What does Nieto mean when she states that all students are “miseducated” and receive only a partial or biased education?
28. Why do students from the dominant culture need multicultural education?
29. What is wrong with the perception by many educators that multicultural education is for “culturally different” or “disadvantaged” students?
30. Describe how multicultural education is pervasive.
31. “What might a multicultural philosophy mean in the way that schools are organized?” (p. 39)
32. Why is multicultural education for social justice?
33. Define praxis.
34. How is multicultural education a process?
35. How are the processes of multicultural education complex, problematic, controversial, and time consuming?

36. What is critical pedagogy? How is it connected to multicultural education?
37. Compare and contrast Freire's notion of "domesticating education" and education for liberation or "transforming action" (p.56).
38. How is critical pedagogy an "exploder of myths" (p.42)?
39. Discuss the examples provided that move beyond academic discourse to reflection and action (or critical pedagogy in action).

REFLECTION JOURNALS

1. Reflect on your original definition of multicultural education (refer to chapter one). After reading Nieto's definition of multicultural education, what would you add to your own definition? What elements remained the same? What was missing? How might comprehensive school reform, critical pedagogy, or any other characteristic missing from your own definition, inform your definition? What about your next steps in developing your multicultural personhood?
2. Because multicultural education is a process (including a personal process) how do you plan to wrestle with the characteristics listed? For example, how will you develop anti-racist practices, how can you include multiple perspectives into your curriculum development, or how can you grapple with issues of social justice with your students or colleagues?
3. According to Nieto, we need to ask profoundly multicultural questions, such as:

"Do all students have access to calculus [physics, or any other high-status courses]?" and "Is the bilingual [ESL, special Ed, or any other program with low status] in the basement? These are "profoundly multicultural questions" precisely because they concern access and equity, rather than simply a change in course content" (p. 37).

From your experience in school, through service-learning, internships, or in your studies, what "profoundly multicultural questions" do you have? Based on multicultural education, what suggestions do you have for addressing these questions?

WHOLE CLASS/GROUP WORK

1. Divide the class into seven groups. Give each student a think sheet and each group poster paper and markers. Allow time for each individual student to think about the characteristics of multicultural education that they will be representing. Have each group gather together and discuss their visions of multicultural education through

their specific characteristic. Instruct each group to represent their characteristic with words, narratives and pictures on the poster paper. Have each group present their poster to the class (See Handout 2.2-2.9)

2. According to Nieto one of the reasons schools are reluctant to tackle racism and discrimination is the guilt many White students and teachers feel about their racial privilege.
“But being antiracist does not mean flailing about in guilt and remorse ... For White students and teachers, this means taking responsibility for being White, a point forcefully made by Robin DiAngelo in a book that asks a question seldom heard in discussions about race, *What Does It Mean to Be White?* (p. 34)

Ask students what they think it means to be White and “move beyond guilt to a state of invigorated awareness and informed confidence in which they take personal and collective action for positive change” (p. 34).

3. Nieto suggests that there are many definitions of multicultural education, encouraging each of us to “foster further *dialogue* and *reflection* so that you will develop your own ideas, priorities, and perspectives” (p. 31). Together within small groups within the classroom (if they are in community-based service-learning placements, organize by site), have each group **discuss** the school, local, state, and national ideas, priorities, and perspectives that would influence their definition of multicultural education. Have students **reflect** and create a common definition of what multicultural education means for the course or the school/community site.

STUDENT AS TEACHER

1. Sonia Nieto defines multicultural education through the following key characteristics: antiracism, basic education, important for all students, pervasive, education for social justice, a process, and critical pedagogy. Locate other experts in the field of multicultural education. What are their definitions? How are they similar? How are they different?
2. Using the Internet, book references, and your own research, create characteristics (much like Nieto to define Critical Pedagogy. Reference scholarly works and provide an overview on the history of critical pedagogy. Include a presentation or handout for classmates.

3. Have students form small groups to examine the critical pedagogical work of Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force (1989); Compton-Lilly (2004); Au, Bigelow, & Karp (2007); Bigelow, Harvey, Karp, & Miller (2001); Lee, Menkart, & Okazawa-Rey (2006); Menkart, Murray, & View (2004); and May & Sleeter (2010). Present findings to class.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN ACTION

1. Write a dialogue poem in response to the quotes on the cover of Chapter Two. Use the chapter contents and your knowledge based on the course and your personal experiences as a way to respond (See Handout 2.5: Multicultural education is pervasive Think Sheet).
 - a. “We don’t need multicultural education here; most of our students are White.”
 - b. “I don’t see color. All my students are the same to me.”
 - c. “We shouldn’t talk about racism in school because it has nothing to do with learning. Besides, it’ll just make kids feel bad.”
 - d. “Let’s not focus on negative things. Can’t we all just get along?”
 - e. “I want to include multicultural education in my curriculum, but there’s just no time for it.”
 - f. “Oh, yes, we have multicultural education here; we celebrate Black History Month, and there’s an annual Diversity Dinner.”
 - g. “Multicultural education is just therapy for Black students.”
 - h. “Multicultural education became irrelevant after September 11. It’s divisive because it focuses on differences. Now, more than ever, we need to stress our similarities”
2. Explore one aspect of critical pedagogy in the classroom by revisiting U.S history through multiple perspectives. Present James Loewen’s *Teaching What Really Happened*, a local textbook, and the video *We Shall Remain: After the Mayflower* and the included resources on Thanksgiving, as references. Have the class investigate those resources and then create criteria for analyzing the textbook based on information from the resources provided. Design a Myths and Reality of Thanksgiving reader’s theater performance that addresses multiple perspectives of Thanksgiving as a culminating activity.

3. Use the handout of quotes (See Handout 2.10: Praxis Activity: Knowledge, Reflection and Action) to engage students in praxis: knowledge, reflection, and action with a synthesis of the chapter. The goal for this activity is a plan of action.

ASSESSMENT

Portfolio/ Synthesis

1. After engaging with the definition of multicultural education during class, have students reflect critically on what they have learned and how they will continue their learning. As Nieto points out, “no one ever stops becoming a multicultural person and knowledge is never complete” (p.40-41). (See Handout 2.2)

They will answer the following questions:

- a. *What is multicultural education?*
 - b. *What did I learn about multicultural education?*
 - c. *Why is multicultural education important?*
 - d. *What will I do with what I have learned about multicultural education?*
2. Have students read the article, “On the Road to Cultural Bias: A Critique of “Oregon Trail CD-ROM” by Bill Bigelow. Create a web or concept map that provides a visual of all the people involved, including African Americans, American Indians, Women, etc. Create a lesson or unit to use with young students that is a critical exploration of history through issues of race, gender, colonization, and class.
 3. Write about an experience you have had with racism, either as the target, the witness or the instigator. Reflect on how multicultural education is antiracist. Reexamine your experience through the lens of multicultural education.
 4. Have students read *You can't fix what you don't look at: Acknowledging race in addressing racial discipline disparities* (Carter, Skiba, Arrendondo, & Pollock, 2016). Then reflect on Nieto's concluding thoughts about multicultural education as a “...more effective education for a changing world” (p. 45).

Critical Thinking Essay

1. Nieto hopes that the reader will develop her/his own priorities and perspectives of multicultural education. Reflect on Nieto's definition and characteristics of multicultural education and add your own priorities and perspectives.

2. In the chapter, Nieto addresses the difficulty that many teachers have addressing issues of race and racism. Why do you think racism is so hard to talk about? What can teachers do to combat racism?
3. Describe how multicultural education is pervasive. Provide examples.
4. How have Paulo Freire's theory of praxis and John Dewey's philosophy of democracy influenced multicultural education as a space for social justice?
5. Using yourself and your experiences as examples, describe how multicultural education is a process. How do these processes affect you as a teacher, future teacher, or a student of multicultural education?
6. One component of critical pedagogy is the reexamination of history. In general, history is written by the conquerors. Using critical pedagogy as a frame of reference, investigate a historical incident through multiple perspectives.

Short Answer Questions

1. Provide examples of how multicultural curriculum is antiracist and antidiscriminatory.
2. Reflecting on multicultural education as basic education, what are the problems with implementing a monocultural education rather than a multicultural education?
3. Multicultural education is important for all students. Why is it important for White students?
4. Provide examples of how a multicultural approach is pervasive in a school climate, physical environment, curriculum, and relationships among teachers and students and community.
5. Provide three reasons why multicultural education is a process.
6. Define critical pedagogy in action. Provide examples.

ABOUT LANGUAGE: THE CONUNDRUM OF RACE

1. What is meant by *race is a social construct*?
2. Does race exist?
3. How is the construction of race different from racism?
4. Why do some scholars put quotations around the word race?

5. What is the difference between using the terms African American and Black?
6. What does the term European American imply that White does not?
7. What are the problems with using terms that emphasize culture instead of race when identifying people?
8. Reflect on the concept that race is a social construct and not biologically determined.
9. What are the challenges of using terms such as White and Black?

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Resources

Bigelow, B. (2001). "On the Road to Cultural Bias: A Critique of "The Oregon Trail" CD-ROM". From Bigelow, B., Harvey, B., Karp, S., & Miller, L. (Eds). *Rethinking Our Classroom: Teaching for Equity and Justice, Volume 2*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, Ltd.

Bigelow, B., & Peterson, B. (2003). *Rethinking Columbus: The next 500 years* (2nd ed.). Milwaukee: Rethinking Schools.

Brown, C. S. (2002). *Refusing Racism: White Allies and the Struggle for Civil Rights*. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.

Bruchac, M., O'Neill C. (2001). *1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving*. Washington, DC: Plimoth Plantation and National Geographic.

Darder, A, Baltodano, M., Torres, R. (2008). *Critical Pedagogy Reader*. New York, New York: Routledge.

Duncan-Andrade, J. & Morell, E. (2008). *The Art of Critical Pedagogy*. New York, New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Loewen, J. (2009). *Teaching What Really Happened*. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.

May, S. & Sleeter, C. (2010) *Critical Multicultural: Theory and Praxis*. New York: Routledge.

Mukhopadhyay, C. C. Pollock, M. (eds).(2008). "Getting rid of the word "Caucasian". *Everyday Anti-racism*. New York: The New Press.

Video Resources:

Brassford, K. (Director and Producer). (2008). *Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority*. See the website: <http://www.aheadofthemajority.com>

This is a film about Patsy Mink, the first woman of color congresswoman. She fought tirelessly for women and minority rights throughout her career.

PBS Broadcasting. (2009). *We Shall Remain: After the Mayflower See*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYAdf-oGc8c>

This is a film about new perspectives on Thanksgiving; it should be used as supplement to any Rethinking Thanksgiving lesson plan.

Internet Resources:

<https://www.rethinkingschools.org/>

Rethinking Schools is a publication for teachers actively engaged in transforming U.S. schools for equity and social justice.

<http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~cmmr/BEResources.html>

The Center for Multilingual Multicultural Research provides bilingual/ESL/multicultural education resources for educators.

http://nmai.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/thanksgiving_poster.pdf

This is the poster resource from the National Museum of the American Indian on American Indian Perspectives on Thanksgiving.

<http://www.tolerance.org/>

Teaching Tolerance is dedicated to reducing prejudice by supporting equitable school experiences. The resources provided by this organization, run by the Southern Poverty Law Center, will help teachers integrate critical pedagogy into their classrooms.

<http://zinnedproject.org/>

The Zinn Education Project is inspired by the critical perspective on American history that Howard Zinn modeled in his book *A People's History of the United States of America*. The Zinn Project website has online curriculum resources and helpful links for rethinking traditional ways of teaching American history.

HANDOUTS

- 2.1** Critical Pedagogy in Action: Dialogue Poem
- 2.2** Multicultural Education is Antiracist Education Think Sheet
- 2.3** Multicultural Education is Basic Education Think Sheet
- 2.4** Multicultural Education is Important for All Students Think Sheet
- 2.5** Multicultural Education is Pervasive Think Sheet
- 2.6** Multicultural Education is Education for Social Justice Think Sheet
- 2.7** Multicultural Education is a Process Think Sheet
- 2.8** Multicultural Education is Critical Pedagogy Think Sheet
- 2.9** Multicultural Education Portfolio Essay
- 2.10** Praxis Activity: Knowledge, Reflection and Action

**HANDOUT 2.1:
CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN ACTION: DIALOGUE POEM THINK SHEET**

Write a dialogue poem in response to the quotes on the cover of chapter two. Use the chapter contents, your knowledge based on the course, and your personal experiences as a way to respond.

Teacher's' Resistance to Multicultural Education	Your Response
"We don't need multicultural education here; most of our students are White."	
"I don't see color. All my students are the same to me."	
"We shouldn't talk about racism in school because it has nothing to do with learning. Besides, it'll just make kids feel bad."	
"Let's not focus on negative things. Can't we all just get along?"	
"I want to include multicultural education in my curriculum, but there's just no time for it."	
"Oh, yes, we have multicultural education here; we celebrate Black History Month, and there's an annual Diversity Dinner."	
"Multicultural education is just therapy for Black students."	
"Multicultural education became irrelevant after September 11. It's divisive because it focuses on differences. Now, more than ever, we need to stress our similarities."	

**2.2 HANDOUT:
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IS ANTIRACIST EDUCATION THINK
SHEET**

Define *multicultural education as antiracist*

Reflect on the following quote:

Consequently, to be inclusive and balanced, multicultural curriculum must, by definition, be antiracist. Teaching does not become more honest and critical simply by becoming more inclusive, but this is an important first step in ensuring that students have access to a wide variety of viewpoints. (p. 32)

Provide examples of antiracist/antidiscriminatory education.

Provide images, words, ideas, or a creative thinking map that wrestles with notions of *multicultural education is antiracist education*?



Share your experiences or absence of experiences with antiracist/antidiscriminatory education in your own education. How will you incorporate antiracist/antidiscriminatory education into your classroom and curriculum?

2.3 HANDOUT: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IS BASIC EDUCATION THINK SHEET

Define *multicultural education is basic education*.

Reflect on the following quote:

“One of the major stumbling blocks to implementing a broadly conceptualized multicultural education is the ossification of the “canon” in our schools. When multicultural education is peripheral to the core curriculum, it is perceived as irrelevant to basic education. But given the reoccurring concern for teaching the “basics,” multicultural education must be understood as basic to an excellent education” (p. 35).

Provide examples of *multicultural education as basic education*.

Share your experiences, or absence of experiences, with *multicultural education as basic education* in your own education.

Provide images, words, ideas, or a creative thinking map that wrestles with notions of *multicultural education is basic education*.

How will you incorporate *multicultural education as basic education* into your classroom and curriculum?

2.4 HANDOUT: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT FOR ALL STUDENTS

Define *multicultural education as important for all students*.

Reflect on the following quote:

It can even be convincingly argued that students from the dominant culture need multicultural education more than others because they are generally miseducated or uneducated about diversity. For example, European American youths often think that they do not even have a culture, at least not in the same sense that easily culturally identifiable youths do. At the same time, they feel that their ways of living, doing things, believing and acting are "normal." Anything else is "ethnic" and exotic" (p. 38).

Provide examples of multicultural education that is important for all students.

Share your experiences, or absence of experiences, with *multicultural education for all students* in your own education

Provide images, words, ideas, or a creative thinking map that wrestles with notions of *multicultural education is important for all students?*

How will you incorporate the concept of *multicultural education for all students* into your classroom and curriculum?

2.5 HANDOUT: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IS PERVASIVE THINK SHEET

Define *multicultural education as pervasive*.

Reflect on the following quote:

Multicultural education is a philosophy, a way of looking at the world, not simply a program or a class or a teacher. A true multicultural approach is pervasive. *It permeates everything: the school climate, physical environment, curriculum, and relationships among teachers and students and community. It is apparent in every lesson, curriculum guide, unit, bulletin board, and letter that is sent home; it can be seen in the process by which books, audiovisual aids, and multimedia materials are acquired for the library, in the games played during recess, and in the lunch that is served.* In this comprehensive way, multicultural education helps us rethink school reform” (p.39).

Provide examples of examples of pervasive multicultural education.

Share your experiences, or absence of experiences, with *multicultural education as pervasive* in your own education.

Provide images, words, ideas, or a creative thinking map that wrestles with notions of *multicultural education is pervasive*.

How will you incorporate the notion of multicultural education as pervasive education in your classroom and curriculum?

2.6 HANDOUT: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IS EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE THINK SHEET

Define multicultural education as education for social justice.

Reflect on the following quote:

“Multicultural education invites student and teachers to put their learning into action for social justice. Multicultural education with a social justice perspective also means learning to question power structures and the status quo” (p.39).

Provide examples of social justice education.

Share your experiences, or absence of experiences, with social justice education.

Provide images, words, ideas, or a creative thinking map that wrestles with notions of *multicultural education is education for social justice*

How will you incorporate social justice education into your classroom and curriculum?

**2.8 HANDOUT: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IS CRITICAL PEDAGOGY
THINK SHEET**

Define *multicultural education as critical pedagogy*.

Reflect on the following quote:

Its opposite is what Paulo Freire called “domesticating education,” – education that emphasizes passivity, acceptance, and submissiveness. According to Freire, education for domestication is a process of “transferring knowledge,” whereas education for liberation is one of “transforming action.” Education that is liberating encourages students to take risks, to be curious, and to question” (p. 41).

Provide examples of critical pedagogy.

Share your experiences, or absence of experiences, with *critical pedagogy*?

Provide images, words, ideas, or a creative thinking map that wrestles with notions of *multicultural education as critical pedagogy*.

How will you incorporate critical pedagogy into your classroom and curriculum?

2.9 HANDOUT: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION PORTFOLIO ESSAY

What? What is multicultural education? What did I learn about multicultural education?	<u>So What?</u> Why is multicultural education important?	<u>Now What?</u> What will I do with what I have learned about multicultural education?

2.10 HANDOUT: PRAXIS ACTIVITY: KNOWLEDGE, REFLECTION AND ACTION

Discuss the quotes and information from the text:

“What I believe is *essential* is an emphasis on the sociopolitical context of education and a rejection of the notion that multicultural education is either a superficial addition of content to the curriculum, or, alternatively, the magic pill that would do away with all educational problems” (p. 31).

In response to reclaiming history, Rebecca Geary’s third great-grandfather, Moses Hunter’s responded to history and agency, “[He] pounded his fist upon the table when he heard my father sharing his school lesson about how Lincoln “freed the slaves.” “Nobody freed me, sir! I earned my freedom with a pitchfork and a knife,” he bellowed in frustrated rage at my father’s misinformation” (p. 33).

According to Homi Bhabha, “...it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history – subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement – that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking” (p. 40).

“Karen McLean Donaldson found that many teachers were in denial about racism and its effects in schools. On the other hand, those who became active in antiracist projects broadened their understandings and were able to use their new skills in creating affirming learning environments for all their students” (p.34).

“The primary victims of racism and discrimination are those who suffer its immediate consequences, but racism and discrimination are destructive and demeaning to everyone. Although not everyone is directly guilty of discrimination, we are all responsible for combating it. This means that working actively for social justice is *everyone’s* business” (p.34).

“Multicultural literacy consists of the skills and abilities to identify the creators of knowledge and their interests... to uncover the assumptions of knowledge, to view knowledge from diverse ethnic and cultural, and to use knowledge to guide action that will create a humane and just world” (p. 48).

Reflect on the following question:

What “profoundly multicultural questions” can you ask of your school, community, college, or self-based on the quotes from Chapter Two?

What problems or issues do you see that need to be ameliorated?

Action: Consider the following problem-posing of critical pedagogy:

1. Identify a problem
2. Analyze the problem
3. Create a plan of action to address the problem.
4. Implement the plan of action