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The Effects of Multiculturalism within the  
Parameters of Instructional Course Design

David R. Blunt, PhD (candidate)

Walden University

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Abstract

The communication of an effective curriculum finds its dependency within the multicultural environment of the classroom, and efficacy of the professional educator while embracing student diversity. Successful student assimilation may depend upon the accuracy of an established curriculum that appropriately adapts to a flexible teaching and learning environment, in which both instructor and student benefit. Furthermore, the students' cultural orientation and home community socio-influences become problematic for a historically White, middle class, monocultural teacher who lacks adequate diversity training techniques. Preparation requires multicultural training, one in which teachers do not perceive students of color with views of low academic expectations. Therefore, multicultural educational course design must account for the stereotype, ethical, and racial myths that abound throughout the education system.

### The Effects of Multiculturalism within the Parameters of Instructional Course Design

Bruch, Jehangir, Jacobs, & Ghere (2004, pp. 12-14) hypothesized that there is a major gap between theory and practice which continually burdens the progress of multicultural education process. Their hypothesis supports a generalized theory that classroom dynamics and student assimilation depend upon the accuracy of an established multicultural curriculum design.

Furthermore, course design needs to appropriately adapt to a flexible teaching and learning environment, in which both instructor and student benefit. Dynamics such as these, although unique in a sense remain constant with respect to certain goals, namely, that content be presented in a fashion readily understood within a multicultural classroom, and the information learned is valuable to the student in supporting real life application.

The general acceptance of multicultural education seems to play an important role in providing equal access to education across cultural groups, social, gender, and racial classes. Therefore, exploring the constructs of effective classroom instructional design in a multicultural environment, is one in which strategies can be formulated while understanding its implications, the limitations that encompass a multicultural educational course design, and the value of enhanced teacher efficacy when working with culturally diverse students.

*The Impetus to Change*

The *Brown v. Board of Education*<sup>1</sup> Supreme Court case on May 17, 1954, set in motion an opportunity for education desegregation to formally begin throughout the country (J. A. Banks, 2004). This decision presented educators with the legal tools necessary, which could provide a connection between *colorless* instructional designs interpreted from a multicultural perspective that might effect social change. The need for multicultural education has surged over the years, and while America, on the surface may give the appearance of a tight-knit community, underneath its evolving cultural demographic, there continues to be a change in the face of America, affecting the present day curricula formation (Huang, 2002).

The ethnic makeup of America is more females than males (96.3/100), with over seventy-five percent of the nation White (Hobbs & Stroops, 2000). However, multicultural acculturation continues on the rise, such that those arriving and staying in U.S., now makeup 25% of the nations color (non-White). Thus, one might expect to see the changing of the educational landscape that will be less historically rigid with outdated philosophical ideologies (Lopez, Freed, & Kijai, 2003).

While it may seem apparent, by the “browning of America” that the traditional cultural teaching techniques, methodologies, and curriculums have been strained, according to Bruch et al. (2004), multiculturalism is a difficult term to define, with various meanings and applications that contribute to the

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.nationalcenter.org/brown.html> for a review of the decision.

meandering of the historical educational delivery system (p. 12). On the other hand, multiculturalism described by Carignan, Sanders, and Pourdavood (2005), are political positions that strive for an equitable society, by recognizing the ethnocultural differences and challenge the ethnocentrism perspectives of historical education (p. 3).

Unfortunately, this ethnocentrism type of philosophy is one that generates a *we* attitude, whose source is mono-cultural in design and teaching, and centers upon the negative stereotypes, “hierarchy of physical differences”, racism, prejudice, and a subconscious approach toward cultural group exclusion (Carignan et al., 2005, p. 3). Thus, a contributory element wrapped in the expectation that students will learn the teacher’s way, instead of the students’, continues to widen the gap between teacher and student (Knapp, 2005).

### *Recognizing Teacher Adversity*

Ethnic disparity within the teacher workforce, in comparison to the student body makeup, is not a hidden causal factor. In some underserved inter-school districts, the White students presence is barely visible (less than 3%), largely saturated with those of color in excess of sixty percent (Orfield & Monfort, 1992). Furthermore, less than five percent of the educators are other than White in these inter-city schools, while students of diverse backgrounds still continue to prevail (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 26). Bissgaard (2005, p. 43) found as a norm, individuals live their lives apart from multicultural exposure, and gravitate or move in a direction that is comfortable, and in compliance with their cultural

traditions. This lifestyle then has a reflection on how professional educators teach and how well students academically perform.

Accepting lower academic standards and poor instructional designs because administrators and staff are culturally untrained, places a void between those who have and those who have not. It is as though ones' teaching style has superseded the diverse learning methodologies that provide cross culture acceptance, in exchange for self perpetuation of a unbeknown personalized agenda which creates distance between the two groups (Liem, Lim, & Liem, 2000). This traditional education delivery system leaves the student population with a continuous growth of under qualified teachers who have received less than their fair share of cultural diversity training (Sawyer, 2000).

Consequently, the expectation one can avoid a "pedagogy-of-poverty", or one in which there is the anticipation students of color perform poorly, is difficult to avoid where teachers lack the appropriate, "urban based training" (p. 344). These multicultural differences, Liem et al. (2000) suggests, serve as a catalysts for potential teaching - learning conflicts, and the difficulties one might face because of new cultural exchanges. Even though acculturation may play a limited role in this conflict, the collision of cultural diversity does not.

Tharp (1989) argued that students became underachievers, partly because the course design failed to consider cultural specific classroom environments, settings, and specifically designed curriculum, which assist in the process of educational learning. Miller-Jones (1989) provided support for Tharp's (1989) observations by suggesting an opposition to classroom curriculum

standardization might conflict with a multicultural specific course design. They argued that a design such as this must provide unbiased content, which specifically cites cultural diversity accurately and according to ethnic traditions students recognize. Noting those of other cultures may have non-traditional and specific ways of responding to learning according to their own traditional and cultural understanding (Miller-Jones, 1989).

Other difficulties may exist are noted in a recent study by Banks (2004), who surveyed Canadian and American elementary school teachers ( $N = 1246$ , 74.6% female, 81% Caucasian, 61.2% over 40 years of age). The researcher found although most (80.3%) had taught in a culturally diverse classroom, 61% reported they were only “somewhat” interested in learning more about multicultural teaching strategies (p. 58). The value of this study is in noting the underlying philosophy of the teachers. The inference is when one designs multicultural courses; a factor in its implementation is the recognition of one’s own personal beliefs may not be similar to the diverse content needed during its implementation. For Carignan et al. (2005), failing to recognize these factors continues to subordinate cultures and oppress the likelihood of stopping the antagonistic educational policies that persist (p. 4).

The expectation of cultural education among the teacher workforce still is slow to change as barely one-half of the colleges in the U.S. surveyed offer a multicultural training course (Smith, Echols, & Thomas, 2001). Teachers who lack multicultural training are reluctant to talk about ethnicity in class because they have limited historical views commonly supported by underrepresented –

stereotyped text books (Bolgatz, 2005, pp. 259-260). Characterized by such descriptive phraseology about cultural issues as, loath to talk, often steer clear, resistant, fear of allowing discussion, too complex for students to understand, may ultimately limit culturally diverse historical inquiries and the discovery of blacks, as an example, brought to this country as slaves and then little is said thereafter (p. 260).

When multiculturalism is not at the forefront of instructional design, teachers find the tactical means to avoid subjects which fall outside the standard guidelines of most traditional textbooks that pay little or no attention toward African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and other ethnic entities and cultural traditions (Bolgatz, 2005, p. 260, ¶ 263). It is as though teachers are unaware of how different their lives are from the students (Knapp, 2005, p. 203). Thus, they enter unprepared, and finds ways to avoid dealing with the cultural differences when confronted.

#### *Additional Historical Diversities*

Traditionally, the campus faculty has remained constant throughout the decades. According to the American Council on Education (ACE, 2000b), Whites, as an ethnic class, still maintain an overwhelming presence in the school system (83.9%), while other ethnic groups, make up the balance of teacher population (which has decreased slightly from the 87.1% saturation in 1995). Current 2004 ethnic and gender data indicate females now make up 38% of the faculty population. Fifty percent of these females are Black, non-Hispanic (ACE, 2004, p. 1).



ACE (1999b) also reported 47% of the faculty believed the schools direction were to focus on community togetherness, and more importantly a noticeable trend by females in attending college increased (ACE, 2000a), marked by higher enrollments by students of color (ACE, 1999a). These gains seem minimal at best compared to the rapid increase in the American population cultural diversity as Day (2001) noted; those of Hispanic-origin for example, can expect to see their population double by 2015 from 1990, contributing to the Nation's population growth by nearly 32 percent (¶1, section 6).

A MetLife (2001) study administered over a six month period in 2001 included students ( $N = 2049$ ), teachers ( $N = 1273$ ), and principals ( $N = 1004$ ) from intermediate public schools near Rochester, New York. The MetLife study results indicated teachers and principals do not have very high academic expectations from students of color, even though nearly a third of the multicultural students think education is a vital part of their future career goals.

Secondly, only 27% of the students surveyed were satisfied with the relationship with their teachers, principals (25%), and 39% of the students trusted their teacher little or not at all (MetLife, 2001, p. 17). Shakespear, Beardsley, and Newton (2003) noted that these figures are not unusual because students feel their educational learning environments have all but lost the caring, respectful, and trusting teachers who understood their culture and can identify with their at-home culturally diverse environments and situations (p. 5). The implication suggests, although course curriculum design may remain adverse to diverse

cultural acknowledgement, students in this study were still able to overcome the apparent learning obstacles and academically perform at or above average.

### *Pluralist Preparation*

The need for cross-cultural experience and training seems to be an overwhelming attribute missing from the culturally deprived, mostly White professional workforce (Melnick & Zeichner, 1995). Teacher candidates continue to come from mainstream backgrounds with idealistic teaching goals and lack the culturally diverse foundational exposure to "interracial and intercultural" experiences (p. 5). This in turn leaves the instructor with an assumption about student diversity that is erroneous, which contributes to the creation of ill-fated curriculums falling academically short (p. 5).

Melnick and Zeichner (1995) found this short sightedness could have been adequately addressed years ago, but the educational teaching industry had a cultural-specific approach that was inherently misaligned. Explained in this fashion, teachers are grouped according to an infusion approach whereby exposure to diversity is highlighted throughout their educational courses; or alternatively, through a segregation philosophy in which cultural diversity is touched upon in a single, isolated course (pp. 6-7).

These two approaches seem to leave little room for alternative theories, as the researchers argue mono-cultural educators are resistant in a sense, because they innately possess "cultural-general" views normally untouched by multicultural diversity (Melnick & Zeichner, 1995, p. 11). Changing such a view may at times fall upon deaf ears; nonetheless, the importance of cultural

curriculum design may be one that stops "teaching propaganda based upon some narrow perspective and a distorted collection of facts" (Bruch et al., 2004, p. 18, ¶ 12).

#### *Curriculum Difference in Cultural Adaptation*

Sawyer (2000) identified curriculum as an interactive process and supports cultural differences within a learning environment. Yet, it is the teacher's lack of knowledge about diversity, as previously reported by Bruch et al. (2004), which seemed to impede a student's learning process. Addressing these differences and learning from them may produce measured positive results. Cultural curriculum adaptation inhibits the effective delivery of valuable content to a student-body constituency, and the perceived expectation entering the classroom academically apart from the objectives, which appear concise and straightforward from the educator's perspective (Shakespeare et al., 2003).

Ladson-Billings (Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 22-26) suggested the elements for incorporating a multicultural design should consider: (a) educational settings, (b) curriculum content and material, (c) teacher education, (d) teachers' beliefs about students, and (e) instructional design approaches. Therefore, a strategic approach in curriculum adaptation is finding the mutual benefit in multicultural course design by removing the group differences that inequities might reflect (Tella, 1997, p. 16).

Tella (1997) recommended teachers establish a non-oppressive democratic approach where there is equal access while maintaining cultural diversity, in which the curriculum is centered on the cultural adaptation of the

individual, thus tying both teacher and student together into a meaningful experience (pp. 18-19). This experience, defined by the student's diversity, and applied by their cultural approach to learning stimulates unique thinkers and learners, in effect, "de-emphasising [sic]" the stigma of diversity (p. 19). Adapting receptive multicultural curriculum for diverse insistent learners can be hindered by the false perceptions and beliefs of teachers, evident in classroom practice which is less student-oriented, and lacks the "specific literacy and interactive skills" needed to engage the student in active learning (Sawyer, 2000, pp. 345-346).

#### *Active Multicultural Learning*

The MetLife (2001) study reported a student's primary desire of a teacher was one who could teach and respect there own customs and traditions, plus feel confident in the teachers ability in understanding the material they were teaching (p. 23). This student desire is also supported by Tella (1997) who argued that teachers need to approach curriculum design in an inclusive manner, supporting multicultural diversity while maintaining the academic standards of meaningful content.

McKeachie and Svinicki (2006) suggest facilitating an active and meaningful learning experience is the professional educator's responsibility while establishing a proactive classroom (p. 265). This proactive theory of learning or *active learning* as some suggest (e.g., Blair, 2004), cumulates when the curriculum design intersects a multicultural perspective and the course learning objectives focus on the process rather than the material itself (p. 266).

Additionally, it brings to light the importance of assembling multicultural curriculum techniques designed to encompass diverse learning environments as a primary goal.

It is not the intention, of active learning within a multicultural setting, to divert the historical responsibility of the primary acquisition of knowledge in traditional forms (e.g., book reading, memorization, and teacher facilitation). Rather its cultural specific curriculum is deigned to empower, and then propel the students toward a new appreciation of learning via a methodological system that is not foreign in the social circles they know. The classroom dynamics of problem-based activities and collaborations draw the student into an active investigative approach while considering their cultural diversity, begins to supersede the static lecturing modules of the past, and now can motivate the student, which transcends the static and historical curriculum objectives (Blair, 2004).

Although the active learning concept is not new, as it is foundational to the earlier learning years of student engagement on a personal basis, in which the teacher is actively involved, *down-on-their-knees* helping students gain an appreciation for their new found learning skills and fascination of the multicultural world that embraces them (Cookson Jr, 2005, p. 10). The lower grade levels, according to Cookson, involve a substantial amount of student class activities, yet it is difficult to place one's finger on why such a transition exists toward the upper grade levels of student passiveness in learning as the instructor takes on a one-way approach toward teaching. Should one view their classroom full of

students, as a host of restless learners desiring some form of educational entertainment? Or have we succumbed to the expectation from the education system that adolescents can now absorb the content from the top-down, without multicultural intervention, as they are then left to ponder the value of its' meaning at a later moment?

In answer to these rhetorical queries, lies the possibility that such student passiveness involves the assertion of content meaningfulness. That is, student's may see the instructional design as one that is not personal, lacks a multicultural present day application, and is a topic for the *other student*. Huang (2002) suggests that students need to identify with the curriculum and understand its content in light of their own heritage, taking on a *colorless* perspective.

An alternate response, as suggested by Naidoo and Searle (1999), is one in which the students are passively dependent upon the teacher dominate educational process. This process adversely promotes a single-phase or one-directional approach to learning (e.g., teacher lecture – student note taking), and leaves little room for a self-reflective, culturally enhanced learning opportunities. They argue that building a course design, which does not offer culturally sensitive content involving active student participation, in effect, spoon-feeds their intellectual experience (pp. 171-173).

### *Vision of Multicultural Curriculum Design*

There continues to be a movement, although slow, that reflects the intent of visionary steps toward multicultural teaching and the recognition of its importance. Zeichner et al. (1998) support three categorical areas of reform

emphasize the issues involving pre-service teacher education. First, provide an institutional and programmatic reform, which shows the importance of a cultural education. Second, address personnel staffing issues and include student input (e.g., teacher admissions requirements supporting standardized multicultural teacher training). Third, establish a program centered curriculum valuing diversity and embrace cultural exposure (e.g., a saturation of multicultural perspectives reflected throughout the curriculum).

Melnick and Zeichner (1998) simplified this approach, narrowing it down to a single cause by placing the lack of cultural training back upon the experienced teaching professional. Their findings shift the teacher learning responsibilities toward tenured teaching educators, in locating ways to acquire the necessary training, which will assist them in properly instructing the diverse student population. Although the increasing teaching population is "White, monolingual, [and] middle class" (p. 88), these leaders compromise their daily teaching styles because the curriculum and the diverse student body cannot connect academically.

As a partial solution, integrating various multicultural curriculum approaches is one-step suggested by Bruch et al. (2004). Transform curriculum into a sensitive multiculturalism delivery system enabling students the opportunity to find operationalized meaningful access (p. 14). Access to curriculum, which is not longer distant or White, and can reach over the walls of diversity if properly designed. The researcher's strategy is to develop overall curriculum goal enhancement, and include (a) academic skills that have future collegiate

applicability; (b) build an underlying structural framework to solve identifiable problems; and (c) formulate attitudes of success that can develop as "learning interests", thus, generating a guiding path toward career success (p. 16-17).

### *Curriculum Design Perspectives*

The Sawyer (2000) study results of teacher's attitudes toward multicultural adaptation, suggested there is still a diverse group of students lacking a consistent multicultural curriculum designed with a meaningful pedagogical perspective (p. 360). Teachers, according to Sawyer, still continually lack the support necessary to make curriculum changes in providing consistent avenues of dialog with their multicultural students. Multicultural educational course design must account for the stereotypes, ethical, and racial myths that abound throughout the educational system; because it is common for educational professionals to teach in an environment surrounded by interpersonal cultural conflicts and inequities associated with ethnic group differences (Tella, 1997, pp. 6-7).

Although formulating an academic strategy that affords the student with classroom fairness and learning opportunity equality, Chamberlain, Guerra, and Garcia (1999) found this may be a difficult task for the teacher as the student body becomes more ethnically diverse, and the teacher work force remains mono-cultural (K. M. Zeichner, 1993).

### *Finding Resolution in Curriculum Design*

When curriculum design embraces multiculturalism, teachers can initiate classroom discussions allowing students to address cultural issues that



otherwise might be foreign. Furthermore, believing these discussions may be controversial if they are opened for student engagement, prohibits teachers from looking beyond the conversation, and finding resolution to complex issues regularly challenging the student (Bolgatz, 2005, p. 263). Ryan (2002) argued that students enter a classroom bringing with them problems of their "socio-economic inequities" so deeply rooted, regardless of the teacher training, the "crisis of access and equity in education" would still play a critical role in the existing barriers between those who learn and those who do not (p. 4).

Teacher preparation is an important element in designing a diverse curriculum. Preparation requires multicultural training, and one in which they do not perceive students of color with views of low academic expectations. This type of training seems to be the first step toward successful educational access, according to Ryan (2002), while addressing academia socio-inequities, and effectively responding to the "White identity" stereotyped teacher confronting multicultural insensitivity issues (p. 5).

By taking an alternative approach to teaching that clearly defines the role of multiculturalism in curriculum, K. M. Zeichner (1993) analysis suggested education can counter the perceived low expectations from students and give the teacher a "framework for organizing classroom learning environments" sensitive to "language, culture, and learning" (p. 15). Culture has a significant impact in the classroom as Chamberlain et al. (1999) argues, and this impact can be a positive one in which both teacher and student gain insight into worlds that otherwise might be foreign (p. 12). This process is not magical, but one of training and

continuous hard work in which the teacher is dedicated to specific curriculum changes that are diverse in nature and sensitive to classroom cultural demands.

### *Teacher Enhanced Curriculum*

One might argue for a standardized teaching design and methodology, however, a cursory view of today's cross-cultural classroom of diversity suggests, one style does not fit all. Cultural academic engagement includes thinking critically, solving problems, and providing activities which help create a challenging and rewarding learning environment, and include additional factors outside the classroom that influence learning trends (Cookson Jr, 2005, p. 10). Naidoo and Searle (1999) supported this hypothesis by suggesting the co-determining achievement factors involved influential elements that are a combination of both school and the student's home environment (pp. 169-170).

Naidoo and Searle (1999) argued that the students home environment acts as a type of academic filtration system, taking into account the cultural learning experiences, habits, and available resources (p. 171). The student's perceptions of meaningful course design are based upon the academic climate of the home, influential peer group attitudes, adaptation (despite a non-supportive culture), and parental expectations related to academic achievement (based upon their own educational success).

Generating learning opportunities among culturally challenged students and within their social context is sometimes a difficult and lengthy process (Tharp, 1989). This requires multicultural course design which includes parental involvement, that otherwise might be non-existent. This also might help one

locate the valuable learning tools that many students of color value and provide support for the differences that emerge (Miller-Jones, 1989).

Some design experts suggest that a multicultural problem exists in the school system because we are looking from the top down instead of the bottom up (Carignan et al., 2005; Miller-Jones, 1989). School systems fill the teaching vacancies before they fill the classrooms. Teachers are class assigned according to their tenure, rather than their compatibility, while failing to ask, *is the instructor right for the students?* From a homeland perspective, the students are already culturally prepared, but they lack the educational understanding that influences the dynamics of their cultures and other traditions.

Furthermore, students resist the assimilation of cultural bonding because some teachers enter the classroom lacking the multicultural training; teach with poorly designed curriculums, and use outdated textbooks that fail to reflect the traditional multicultural values that demand a voice. For Knapp (2005), this approach is all wrong because teachers must know about their students before they enter the classroom.

The school administration needs to supply an ethnic and cultural breakdown and make notes regarding specific cultural traditions. Clear, concise, and published guidelines should offer problem resolution remedies, easily accessible by staff. Faculty in-box suggestions must de-emphasize mono-cultural attitudes, which impede the students learning experience. They need to be reminded that multicultural course design remains in flux, according to Bolgatz

(2005), and the growth of classroom diversity can out pace the necessary course design changes that need to be made in a timely manner.

### *Multicultural Design Goals*

A goal of multicultural lesson design should include text books which illustrate cultural diversity by experienced authors who have lived with oppression and discrimination (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Books that tell the whole story and are not mono-cultural specific can help students develop and understand multicultural diversity and traditions. Huang (2002) agreed by suggesting that lessons on diversity generate multiple perspectives and help students not only understand their differences, but also provide an opportunity to realize their “sameness” (p. 20).

Chamberlain et al. (1999) endorsed a similar diverse teacher-enhancing style and curriculum design approach by knowing, (a) cultures have both similarities and differences; (b) it takes skill and practice to develop a culturally responsive classroom; (c) recognizing one's own cultural awareness, and then (d) understanding the student's cultural background (pp. 55-56). Furthermore, Chamberlain et al. prompts teachers to gain an accurate knowledge of the classroom diversity from their students then practical and useable curriculum application may be taught with some predictability (p. 54).

While one needs to consider issues of accessibility, sound multicultural design must find a way to address the cultural needs of all students in the classroom. Daily intercultural exchanges should be the norm, with an effort toward understanding the impact the world plays on the school environment and

the interactions of the students and faculty. Becoming a multi- or interculturally proficient teacher, with a commitment toward educational equality, denouncing prejudice and cultural discrimination should be an underlying theme and requirement. This must be the standard for all professional educators to seek and obtain in curriculum course design (Carignan et al., 2005, p. 6)

### Discussion

Multicultural course design provides for a more interdisciplinary approach that utilize the fundamental skills in reading and writing necessary to teach a diverse perspective (Whalon & Karr-Kidwell, 1993, p. 9). Without this type of approach, the qualitative experience in education becomes an unrealistic goal because it lacks the ethnically relevant content that helps culturally diverse students identify with their cultural values and choices (Whalon & Karr-Kidwell, 1993).

Designing instructional courses, within a multicultural framework as an integral part of its implementation, requires one outline specific teacher related challenges that influence the culturally diverse student's ability to learn.

Challenges such as:

- (a) Recognize language barriers in which the teacher experiences verbal communication or miscommunication problems.
- (b) Discover traditions and the cultural mix that help assist the learning appropriate and inappropriate teaching and classroom behavior.
- (c) Understand the important role of parents and their involvement in proactive learning in light of their customs and traditions.

(d) Adjust the student's active learning skills that reflect the students' life experiences and traditional cultural expectations. (J. A. Banks, 2004, pp. 65-70)

Ladson-Billings (1994) argued for the hiring of bilingual teaching professionals that have the ability to confront cultural prejudice rampant throughout the Western textbooks. This in turn provides students with an additional opportunity to gain a unique insight into recognizing the value of their culture, the traditions of others, and the existing connection with humankind (p. 26).

Multicultural education as described by the National Association for Multicultural Education (2003) is a design process which seeks to find the highest academic standards possible while teaching the diverse cultural origins, traditions and beliefs associated with other cultures. Multicultural design incorporates life histories and experiences, which help one, understand the unique differences and still find purpose in the commonness shared.

Multicultural course design needs to adapt to the current needs of the students, as one can rest assured, by tomorrow it will change. This design seeks to find the similarities and differences without "trivializing and folklorizing" the cultures it is deigned to help (Carignan et al., 2005, p. 5). Cultural instructional design helps the teacher re-visit the perspectives and re-evaluate their personal bias and prejudice in multicultural instruction.

The Cho and DeCastro (2005) study, similar to the Banks (2004) research noted earlier, involved secondary pre-service teachers in California, and

assessed their attitudes toward multicultural training and teaching. The test correlation results found between multicultural education training and an increased awareness, understanding, and appreciation for other cultures were significant (p. 26). This is a valuable finding, as Banks, while citing the dismal figures and poor attitudes toward multicultural training, Cho and DeCastro results noted that despite teacher's initial negative attitude toward multicultural training, many found, based upon their classroom post-course exposure, both of the groups (i.e., teacher and student) had a favorable view of each others culture and traditions (p. 26).

Multicultural course curriculum designers should keep these results in mind when posing issues of concern related to initial course construction. As these primary variables in course design are training, preparedness, and attitude of the teacher. One additional note regarding both studies (i.e., J. A. Banks, 2004; Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005), the teachers reported they still felt the need for more training even though they had been involved or taken multicultural course training .

As teachers who have had training still at times feel inadequate or would like more training, course designers may need to devise a pre-test system that evaluates the multicultural propensities that may be pervasive, while addressing issues of specific cultural training for the type of student diversity expected in the classroom. Thus, it would appear when addressing teacher bias, prejudice, and apathy toward multicultural educational training, required training may be the only

recourse, and in the end, resolves some of these issues and produces a more cohesive mainstream approach toward fundamental cultural teaching.

### Conclusion

J.A. Banks (1991) wrote nearly fifteen years ago, that it was the educational systems responsibility, to teach students the “values of the people” (p. 34); and by recognizing the importance in learning other multicultural traditions that have added to the total experience we feel and share. Professional educational designers can add value to the learning experience by thwarting the misconceptions, bias, and stereotypes accepted since childbirth (p. 35).

Multicultural education can open the door to the past with a new set of attitudes and perspectives. This educational perspective is one that understands what it means when textbooks describe *who* was moving west. As an example, J. Banks (1991) provided an interesting vignette by posing rhetorical questions that ask which west? When the Sioux considered the *West* home, was it central to them? On the other hand, west in relation to the Alaskans, because the West was south, or the Mexicans, where the West was North (pp. 2-3). Designing a multicultural course helps students from all nations embrace their own cultural origin, while giving them a historical perspective that does not *colorize* these accounts and pastel paints the canvas of accuracy, fairness, and accountability in education.

Appropriate multicultural education, is a design concept that includes diversity and a construction process leading to knowledge. It embraces empathy for all groups that have been omitted, left out, and characterized in such a



fashion, that students cannibalize the historical reality of the truth (J. Banks, 1991, p. 2). The Sioux reported by J. Banks were called savages, the original Spanish inhabitants of California are now called immigrants, and the biological perpetuation of genetic theoretical intelligence is left to scientific racism that has “influenced the interpretations of mental ability tests” (p. 2).

The lack of multicultural influence within the instructional design course which excludes cultural diversity can distort the reality of the event and misinform those who read those accounts. It may leave the reader with a misinterpreted biased opinion, conjuring up false realities about these diverse cultures. When there is a misunderstanding of the biased historical accounts, it generates an illusion that appears factual. Cho and DeCastro (2005) described a similar modern day stereotype in this fashion:

Asian parents push their kids to do well in schools. Blacks don't learn as well as White people. Why are we favoring a certain group, but not others? Since Hispanic parents don't value education, why bother tailoring instruction to meet their need when they (Hispanic parents) don't care? (p. 24).

Cho and DeCastro (2005) argued that proper educational design which included diverse cultural views would have laid to rest these types of stereotypes years ago. The researchers cite the lack of teacher preparation, poorly constructed educational programs, and an overall disbelief that there is an assimilation problem in the school system (p. 25). Some still think knowledge is

static, moves at a slow pace, and can reach the masses based upon the original one-directional educational process (J. A. Banks, 1991).

Knapp (2005) succinctly wrote, “there really are no ‘unmotivated’ students, there are just students who are motivated by different means and toward different ends than the teacher had in mind” (p. 203). Although our focus as professional educators is to design and provide a product that is content relevant, dynamic in its presentation while maintaining multicultural sensitivity, the final decision of applicability may still rest in the hands of the students, in which multicultural course design motivates them to seek social change.

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