The Canon Debate, Knowledge Construction, and Multicultural Education

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I review the debate over multicultural education in this article, state that all knowledge reflects the values and interests of its creators, and illustrate how the debate between the multiculturalists and the Western traditionalists is rooted in their conflicting conceptions about the nature of knowledge and their divergent political and social interests. I present a typology that describes five types of knowledge and contend that each type should be a part of the school, college, and university curriculum.

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A heated and divisive national debate is taking place about what knowledge related to ethnic and cultural diversity should be taught in the school and university curriculum (Asante, 1991a; Asante & Ravitch, 1991; D'Souza, 1991; Glazer, 1991; Schlesinger, 1991; Woodward, 1991). This debate has heightened ethnic tension and confused many educators about the meaning of multicultural education. At least three different groups of scholars are participating in the canon debate: the Western traditionalists, the multiculturalists, and the Afrocentrists. Although there are a range of perspectives and views within each of these groups, all groups share a number of important assumptions and beliefs about the nature of diversity in the United States and about the role of educational institutions in a pluralistic society.

The Western traditionalists have initiated a national effort to defend the dominance of Western civilization in the school and university curriculum (Gray, 1991; Howe, 1991; Woodward, 1991). These scholars believe that Western history, literature, and culture are endangered in the school and university curriculum because of the push by feminists, ethnic minority scholars, and other multiculturalists for curriculum reform and transformation. The Western traditionalists have formed an organization called the National Association of Scholars to defend the dominance of Western civilization in the curriculum.

The multiculturalists believe that the school, college, and university curriculum marginalizes the experiences of people of color and of women (Butler & Walter, 1991; Gates, 1992; Grant, 1992; Sleeter, personal communication, October 26, 1991). They contend that the curriculum should be reformed so that it will more accurately reflect the histories and cultures of ethnic groups and women. Two organizations have been formed to promote issues related to ethnic and cultural diversity. Teachers for a Democratic Culture promotes ethnic studies and women studies at the university level. The National Association for Multicultural Education focuses on teacher education and multicultural education in the nation's schools.

The Afrocentrists maintain that African culture and history should be placed at the "center" of the curriculum in order to motivate African Americans students to learn and to help all students to understand the important role that Africa has played in the development of Western civilization (Asante, 1991a). Many mainstream multiculturalists are ambivalent about Afrocentrism, although few have publicly opposed it. This is in part because the Western traditionalists rarely distinguish the Afrocentrists from the multiculturalists and describe them as one group. Some multiculturalists may also perceive Afrocentric ideas as compatible with a broader concept of multicultural education.

The influence of the multiculturalists within schools and universities in the last 20 years has been substantial. Many school districts, state departments of education, local school districts, and private agencies have developed and implemented multicultural staff development programs, conferences, policies, and curricula (New York City Board of Education, 1990; New York State Department of Education, 1989, 1991; Sokol, 1990). Multicultural requirements, programs, and policies have also been implemented at many of the nation's leading research universities, including the University of California, Berkeley, Stanford University, The Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Wisconsin system. The success that the multiculturalists have had in implementing their ideas within schools and universities is probably a major reason that the Western traditionalists are trying to halt multicultural reforms in the nation's schools, colleges, and universities.

The debate between the Western traditionalists and the multiculturalists is consistent with the ideals of a democratic society. To date, however, it has resulted in little productive interaction between the Western traditionalists and the multiculturalists. Rather, each group has talked primarily to audiences it viewed as sympathetic to its ideologies and visions of the present and future (Franklin, 1991; Schlesinger, 1991). Because there has been little productive dialogue and exchange between the Western traditionalists and the multiculturalists, the debate has been polarized, and writers have frequently not conformed to the established rules of scholarship (D'Souza, 1991). A kind of forensic social science has developed (Rivlin, 1973), with each side stating briefs and then marshaling evidence to support its

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position. The debate has also taken place primarily in the popular press rather than in academic and scholarly journals.

Valuation and Knowledge Construction

I hope to make a positive contribution to the canon debate in this article by providing evidence for the claim that the positions of both the Western traditionalists and the multiculturalists reflect values, ideologies, political positions, and human interests. Each position also implies a kind of knowledge that should be taught in the school and university curriculum. I will present a typology of the kinds of knowledge that exist in society and in educational institutions. This typology is designed to help practicing educators and researchers to identify types of knowledge that reflect particular values, assumptions, perspectives, and ideological positions.

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

I argue that students should study all five types of knowledge. However, my own work and philosophical position are within the transformative tradition in ethnic studies and multicultural education (Banks, 1988, 1991; Banks & Banks, 1989). This tradition links knowledge, social commitment, and action (Meier & Rudwick, 1986). A transformative, action-oriented curriculum, in my view, can best be implemented when students examine different types of knowledge in a democratic classroom where they can freely examine their perspectives and moral commitments.

The Nature of Knowledge

I am using knowledge in this article to mean the way a person explains or interprets reality. *The American Heritage Dictionary* (1983) defines knowledge as "familiarity, awareness, or understandings gained through experience or study. The sum or range of what has been perceived, discovered or inferred" (p. 384). My conceptualization of knowledge is broad and is used the way in which it is usually used in the sociology of knowledge literature to include ideas, values, and interpretations (Farganis, 1986). As postmodern theorists have pointed out, knowledge is socially constructed and reflects human interests, values, and action (Code, 1991; Foucault, 1972; S. Harding, 1991; Rorty, 1989). Although many complex factors influence the knowledge that is created by an individual or group, including the actuality of what occurred, the knowledge that people create is heavily influenced by their interpretations of their experiences and their positions within particular social, economic, and political systems and structures of a society.

In the Western empirical tradition, the ideal within each academic discipline is the formulation of knowledge without the influence of the researcher's personal or cultural characteristics (Greer, 1969; Kaplan, 1964). However, as critical and postmodern theorists have pointed out, personal, cultural, and social factors influence the formulation of knowledge even when objective knowledge is the ideal within a discipline (Cherryholmes, 1988; Foucault, 1972; Habermas, 1971; Rorty, 1989; Young, 1971). Often the researchers themselves are unaware of how their personal experiences and positions within society influence the knowledge they produce. Most mainstream historians were unaware of how their regional and cultural biases influenced their interpretation of the Reconstruction period until W. E. B. DuBois published a study that challenged the accepted and established interpretations of that historical period (DuBois, 1935/1962).

Positionality and Knowledge Construction

Positionality is an important concept that emerged out of feminist scholarship. Tetreault (1993) writes:

> Positionality means that important aspects of our identity, for example, our gender, our race, our class, our age ... are markers of relational positions rather than essential qualities. Their effects and implications change according to context. Recently, feminist thinkers have seen knowledge as valid when it comes from an acknowledgment of the knower's specific position in any context, one always defined by gender, race, class and other variables. (p. 139)

Positionality reveals the importance of identifying the positions and frames of reference from which scholars and writers present their data, interpretations, analyses, and instruction (Anzaldúa, 1990; Ellsworth, 1989). The need for researchers and scholars to identify their ideological positions and normative assumptions in their works—an inherent part of feminist and ethnic studies scholarship—contrasts with the empirical paradigm that has dominated science and research in the United States (Code, 1991; S. Harding, 1991).

The assumption within the Western empirical paradigm is that the knowledge produced within it is neutral and objective and that its principles are universal. The effects of values, frames of references, and the normative positions of researchers and scholars are infrequently discussed within the traditional empirical paradigm that has dominated scholarship and teaching in American colleges and universities since the turn of the century. However, scholars such as Mydral (1944) and Clark (1965), prior to the feminist and ethnic studies movements, wrote about the need for scholars to recognize and state their normative positions and valuations and to become, in the apt words of Kenneth B. Clark, "involved observers." Myrdal stated that valuations are not just attached to research but permeate it. He wrote, "*There is no device for excluding biases in social sciences than to face the valuations and to introduce them as explicitly stated, specific, and sufficiently concretized value premises*" (p. 1043).

Postmodern and critical theorists such as Habermas (1971) and Giroux (1983), and feminist postmodern theorists such as Farganis (1986), Code (1991), and S. Harding (1991), have developed important critiques of empirical knowledge. They argue that despite its claims, modern science is not value-free but contains important human interests and normative assumptions that should be identified, discussed, and examined. Code (1991), a feminist epistemologist, states that

academic knowledge is both subjective and objective and that both aspects should be recognized and discussed. Code states that we need to ask these kinds of questions: "Out of whose subjectivity has this ideal [of objectivity] grown? Whose standpoint, whose values does it represent?" (p. 70). She writes:

> The point of the questions is to discover how subjective and objective conditions together produce knowledge, values, and epistemology. It is neither to reject objectivity nor to glorify subjectivity in its stead. Knowledge is neither value-free nor value-neutral; the processes that produce it are themselves value-laden; and these values are open to evaluation. (p. 70)

In her book, *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge,* Code (1991) raises the question, "Is the sex of the knower epistemologically significant?" (p. 7). She answers this question in the affirmative because of the ways in which gender influences how knowledge is constructed, interpreted, and institutionalized within U.S. society. The ethnic and cultural experiences of the knower are also epistemologically significant because these factors also influence knowledge construction, use, and interpretation in U.S. society.

Empirical scholarship has been limited by the assumptions and biases that are implicit within it (Code, 1991; Gordon, 1985; S. Harding, 1991). However, these biases and assumptions have been infrequently recognized by the scholars and researchers themselves and by the consumers of their works, such as other scholars, professors, teachers, and the general reader. The lack of recognition and identification of these biases, assumptions, perspectives, and points of view have frequently victimized people of color such as African Americans and American Indians because of the stereotypes and misconceptions that have been perpetuated about them in the historical and social science literature (Ladner, 1973; Phillips, 1918).

Gordon, Miller, and Rollock (1990) call the bias that results in the negative depiction of minority groups by mainstream social scientists "communicentric bias." They point out that mainstream social scientists have often viewed diversity as deviance and differences as deficits. An important outcome of the revisionist and transformative interpretations that have been produced by scholars working in feminist and ethnic studies is that many misconceptions and partial truths about women and ethnic groups have been viewed from different and more complete perspectives (Acuña, 1988; Blassingame, 1972; V. Harding, 1981; King & Mitchell, 1990; Merton, 1972).

More complete perspectives result in a closer approximation to the actuality of what occurred. In an important and influential essay, Merton (1972) notes that the perspectives of both "insiders" and "outsiders" are needed to enable social scientists to gain a complete view of social reality. Anna Julia Cooper, the African American educator, made a point similar to Merton's when she wrote about how the perspectives of women enlarged our vision (Cooper, 1892/1969, cited in Minnich, 1990, p. viii).

> The world has had to limp along with the wobbling gait and the one-sided hesitancy of a man with one eye. Suddenly the bandage is removed from the other eye and the whole body is filled with light. It sees a circle where before it saw a segment.

A Knowledge Typology

A description of the major types of knowledge can help teachers and curriculum specialists to identify perspectives and content needed to make the curriculum multicultural. Each of the types of knowledge described below reflects particular purposes, perspectives, experiences, goals, and human interests. Teaching students various types of knowledge can help them to better understand the perspectives of different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups as well as to develop their own versions and interpretations of issues and events.

I identify and describe five types of knowledge (see Table 1): (a) personal/cultural knowledge; (b) popular knowledge; (c) mainstream academic knowledge; (d) transformative academic knowledge; and (e) school knowledge. This is an ideal-type typology in the Weberian sense. The five categories approximate, but do not describe, reality in its total complexity. The categories are useful conceptual tools for thinking about knowledge and planning multicultural teaching. For example, although the categories can be conceptually distinguished, in reality they overlap and are interrelated in a dynamic way.

Since the 1960s, some of the findings and insights from transformative academic knowledge have been incorporated into mainstream academic knowledge and scholarship. Traditionally, students were taught in schools and universities that the land that became North America was a thinly populated wilderness when the Europeans arrived in the 16th century and that African Americans had made few contributions to the development of American civilization (mainstream academic knowledge). Some of the findings from transformative academic knowledge that challenged these conceptions have influenced mainstream academic scholarship and have been incorporated into mainstream college and school textbooks (Hoxie, no date; Thornton, 1987). Consequently, the relationship between the five categories of knowledge is dynamic and interactive rather than static (see Figure 1).

The Types of Knowledge

Personal and Cultural Knowledge

The concepts, explanations, and interpretations that students derive from personal experiences in their homes, families, and community cultures constitute personal and cultural

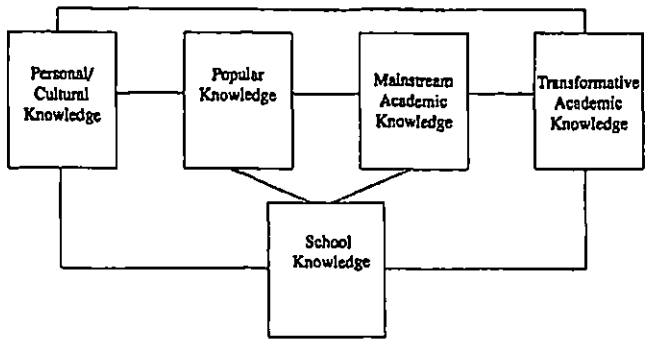

FIGURE 1. *The interrelationship of the types of knowledge. This figure illustrates that although the five types of knowledge discussed in this article are conceptually distinct, they are highly interrelated in a complex and dynamic way.*

Table 1

Types of Knowledge

Knowledge Type	Definition	Examples
Personal/cultural	The concepts, explanations, and interpretations that students derive from personal experiences in their homes, families, and community cultures.	Understandings by many African Americans and Hispanic students that highly individualistic behavior will be negatively sanctioned by many adults and peers in their cultural communities.
Popular	The facts, concepts, explanations, and interpretations that are institutionalized within the mass media and other institutions that are part of the popular culture.	Movies such as *Birth of a Nation, How the West Was Won,* and *Dances With Wolves.*
Mainstream academic	The concepts, paradigms, theories, and explanations that constitute traditional Western-centric knowledge in history and the behavioral and social sciences.	Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery;* Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier theory; Arthur R. Jensen's theory about Black and White intelligence.
Transformative academic	The facts, concepts, paradigms, themes, and explanations that challenge mainstream academic knowledge and expand and substantially revise established canons, paradigms, theories, explanations, and research methods. When transformative academic paradigms replace mainstream ones, a scientific revolution has occurred. What is more normal is that transformative academic paradigms coexist with established ones.	George Washington Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America;* W. E. B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction;* Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-education of the Negro;* Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past;* Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos;* Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750–1925.*
School	The facts, concepts, generalizations, and interpretations that are presented in textbooks, teacher's guides, other media forms, and lectures by teachers.	Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti, *Rise of the American Nation;* Richard C. Brown, Wilhelmena S. Robinson, & John Cunningham, *Let Freedom Ring: A United States History.*

knowledge. The assumptions, perspectives, and insights that students derive from their experiences in their homes and community cultures are used as screens to view and interpret the knowledge and experiences that they encounter in the school and in other institutions within the larger society.

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

Delpit (1988) has stated that African American students are often unfamiliar with school cultural knowledge regarding power relationships. They consequently experience academic and behavioral problems because of their failure to conform to established norms, rules, and expectations. She recommends that teachers help African American students learn the rules of power in the school culture by explicitly teaching them to the students. The cultural knowledge that many African American, Latino, and American Indian students bring to school conflict with school norms and values, with school knowledge, and with the ways that teachers interpret and mediate school knowledge. Student cultural knowledge and school knowledge often conflict on variables related to the ways that the individual should relate to and interact with the group (Hale-Benson, 1982; Ramírez & Castañeda, 1974; Shade, 1989), normative communication styles and interactions (Heath, 1983, Labov, 1975; Philips, 1983; Smitherman, 1977), and perspectives on the nature of U.S. history.

Personal and cultural knowledge is problematic when it conflicts with scientific ways of validating knowledge, is oppositional to the culture of the school, or challenges the main tenets and assumptions of mainstream academic knowledge. Much of the knowledge about out-groups that students learn from their home and community cultures consists of misconceptions, stereotypes, and partial truths (Milner, 1983). Most students in the United States are socialized within communities that are segregated along racial, ethnic, and social-class lines. Consequently, most American

youths have few opportunities to learn firsthand about the cultures of people from different racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and social-class groups.

The challenge that teachers face is how to make effective instructional use of the personal and cultural knowledge of students while at the same time helping them to reach beyond their own cultural boundaries. Although the school should recognize, validate, and make effective use of student personal and cultural knowledge in instruction, an important goal of education is to free students from their cultural and ethnic boundaries and enable them to cross cultural borders freely (Banks, 1988, 1991/1992).

In the past, the school has paid scant attention to the personal and cultural knowledge of students and has concentrated on teaching them school knowledge (Sleeter & Grant, 1991a). This practice has had different results for most White middle-class students, for most low-income students, and for most African American and Latino students. Because school knowledge is more consistent with the cultural experiences of most White middle-class students than for most other groups of students, these students have generally found the school a more comfortable place than have low-income students and most students of color—the majority of whom are also low income. A number of writers have described the ways in which many African American, American Indian, and Latino students find the school culture alienating and inconsistent with their cultural experiences, hopes, dreams, and struggles (Hale-Benson, 1982; Heath, 1983; Ramírez & Castañeda, 1974; Shade, 1989).

It is important for teachers to be aware of the personal and cultural knowledge of students when designing the curriculum for today's multicultural schools. Teachers can use student personal cultural knowledge as a vehicle to motivate students and as a foundation for teaching school knowledge. When teaching a unit on the Westward Movement to Lakota Sioux students, for example, the teacher can ask the students to make a list of their views about the Westward Movement, to relate family stories about the coming of the Whites to Lakota Sioux homelands, and to interview parents and grandparents about their perceptions of what happened when the Whites first occupied Indian lands. When teachers begin a unit on the Westward Movement with student personal cultural knowledge, they can increase student motivation as well as deepen their understanding of the schoolbook version (Wiggington, 1991/1992).

Popular Knowledge

Popular knowledge consists of the facts, interpretations, and beliefs that are institutionalized within television, movies, videos, records, and other forms of the mass media. Many of the tenets of popular knowledge are conveyed in subtle rather than obvious ways. Some examples of statements that constitute important themes in popular knowledge follow: (a) The United States is a powerful nation with unlimited opportunities for individuals who are willing to take advantage of them. (b) To succeed in the United States, an individual only has to work hard. You can realize your dreams in the United States if you are willing to work hard and pull yourself up by the bootstrap. (c) As a land of opportunity for all, the United States is a highly cohesive nation, whose ideals of equality and freedom are shared by all.

Most of the major tenets of American popular culture are widely shared and are deeply entrenched in U.S. society. However, they are rarely explicitly articulated. Rather, they are presented in the media and in other sources in the forms of stories, anecdotes, news stories, and interpretations of current events (Cortés, 1991a, 1991b; Greenfield & Cortés, 1991).

Commercial entertainment films both reflect and perpetuate popular knowledge (Bogle, 1989; Cortés, 1991a, 1991b; Greenfield & Cortés, 1991). While preparing to write this article, I viewed an important and influential film that was directed by John Ford and released by MGM in 1962, *How the West Was Won*. I selected this film for review because the settlement of the West is a major theme in American culture and society about which there are many popular images, beliefs, myths, and misconceptions. In viewing the film, I was particularly interested in the images it depicted about the settlement of the West, about the people who were already in the West, and about those who went West looking for new opportunities.

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

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

Mainstream Academic Knowledge

Mainstream academic knowledge consists of the concepts, paradigms, theories, and explanations that constitute traditional and established knowledge in the behavioral and social sciences. An important tenet within the mainstream academic paradigm is that there is a set of objective truths that can be verified through rigorous and objective research procedures that are uninfluenced by human interests, values, and perspectives (Greer, 1969; Kaplan, 1964; Sleeter, 1991). This empirical knowledge, uninfluenced by human values and interests, constitute a body of objective truths that should constitute the core of the school and university curriculum. Much of this objective knowledge originated in the West but is considered universal in nature and application.

Mainstream academic knowledge is the knowledge that multicultural critics such as Ravitch and Finn (1987), Hirsch (1987), and Bloom (1987) claim is threatened by the addition of content about women and ethnic minorities to the school and university curriculum. This knowledge reflects the established, Western-oriented canon that has historically dominated university research and teaching in the United States. Mainstream academic knowledge consists of the theories and interpretations that are internalized and ac-

cepted by most university researchers, academic societies, and organizations such as the American Historical Association, the American Sociological Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Academy of Sciences.

It is important to point out, however, that an increasing number of university scholars are critical theorists and postmodernists who question the empirical paradigm that dominates Western science (Cherryholmes, 1988; Giroux, 1983; Rosenau, 1992). Many of these individuals are members of national academic organizations, such as the American Historical Association and the American Sociological Association. In most of these professional organizations, the postmodern scholars—made up of significant numbers of scholars of color and feminists—have formed caucuses and interest groups within the mainstream professional organizations.

No claim is made here that there is a uniformity of beliefs among mainstream academic scholars, but rather that there are dominant canons, paradigms, and theories that are accepted by the community of mainstream academic scholars and researchers. These established canons and paradigms are occasionally challenged within the mainstream academic community itself. However, they receive their most serious challenges from academics outside the mainstream, such as scholars within the transformative academic community whom I will describe later.

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

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

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the American Indian was portrayed in mainstream academic knowledge as either a noble or a hostile savage (Hoxie, 1988). Other notions that became institutionalized within mainstream academic knowledge include the idea that Columbus discovered America and that America was a thinly populated frontier when the Europeans arrived in the late 15th century. Frederick Jackson Turner (Turner, 1894/1989) argued that the frontier, which he regarded as a wilderness, was the main source of American democracy. Although Turner's thesis is now being highly criticized by revisionist historians, his essay established a conception of the West that has been highly influential in American mainstream scholarship, in the popular culture, and in schoolbooks. The conception of the West he depicted is still influential today in the school curriculum and in textbooks (Sleeter & Grant, 1991b).

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

Transformative Academic Knowledge

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

An important tenet of mainstream academic knowledge is that it is neutral, objective, and was uninfluenced by human interests and values. Transformative academic knowledge reflects postmodern assumptions and goals about the nature and goals of knowledge (Foucault, 1972; Rorty, 1989; Rosenau, 1992). Transformative academic scholars assume that knowledge is not neutral but is influenced by human interests, that all knowledge reflects the power and social relationships within society, and that an important purpose of knowledge construction is to help people improve society (Code, 1991, S. Harding, 1991; hooks & West, 1991; King & Mitchell, 1990; Minnich, 1990). Write King and Mitchell: "Like other praxis-oriented Critical approaches, the Afrocentric method seeks to enable people to understand social reality in order to change it. But its additional imperative is to transform the society's basic ethos" (p. 95).

These statements reflect some of the main ideas and concepts in transformative academic knowledge: Columbus did not discover America. The Indians had been living in this land for about 40,000 years when the Europeans arrived. Concepts such as "The European Discovery of America" and "The Westward Movement" need to be reconceptualized and viewed from the perspectives of different cultural and ethnic groups. The Lakota Sioux's homeland was not the West to them; it was the center of the universe. It was not the West for the Alaskans; it was South. It was East for the Japanese and North for the people who lived in Mexico. The history of the United States has not been one of continuous progress toward democratic ideals. Rather, the nation's history has been characterized by a cyclic quest for democracy and by conflict, struggle, violence, and exclusion (Acuña, 1988; Zinn, 1980). A major challenge that faces

the nation is how to make its democratic ideals a reality for all.

Transformative academic knowledge has a long history in the United States. In 1882 and 1883, George Washington Williams (1849–1891) published, in two volumes, the first comprehensive history of African Americans in the United States, *A History of the Negro Race in America From 1619 to 1880* (Williams, 1982–1983/1968). Williams, like other African American scholars after him, decided to research and write about the Black experience because of the neglect of African Americans by mainstream historians and social scientists and because of the stereotypes and misconceptions about African Americans that appeared in mainstream scholarship.

W. E. B. DuBois (1868–1963) is probably the most prolific African American scholar in U.S. history. His published writings constitute 38 volumes (Aptheker, 1973). DuBois devoted his long and prolific career to the formulation of new data, concepts, and paradigms that could be used to reinterpret the Black experience and reveal the role that African Americans had played in the development of American society. His seminal works include *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870,* the first volume of the Harvard Historical Studies (DuBois, 1896/1969). Perhaps his most discussed book is *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880,* published in 1935 (1935/1962). In this book, DuBois challenged the accepted, institutionalized interpretations of Reconstruction and emphasized the accomplishments of the Reconstruction governments and legislatures, especially the establishment of free public schools.

Carter G. Woodson (1875–1950), the historian and educator who founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and the *Journal of Negro History,* also challenged established paradigms about the treatment of African Americans in a series of important publications, including *The Mis-education of the Negro,* published in 1933. Woodson and Wesley (1922) published a highly successful college textbook that described the contributions that African Americans have made to American life, *The Negro in Our History.* This book was issued in 10 editions.

Transformative Scholarship Since the 1970s

Many scholars have produced significant research and theories since the early 1970s that have challenged and modified institutionalized stereotypes and misconceptions about ethnic minorities, formulated new concepts and paradigms, and forced mainstream scholars to rethink established interpretations. Much of the transformative academic knowledge that has been produced since the 1970s is becoming institutionalized within mainstream scholarship and within the school, college, and university curricula. In time, much of this scholarship will become mainstream, thus reflecting the highly interrelated nature of the types of knowledge conceptualized and described in this article.

Only a few examples of this new, transformative scholarship will be mentioned here because of the limited scope of this article. Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (1980); *Red, White and Black: The Peoples of Early America* by Gary B. Nash (1982); *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literacy Criticism* by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1988); *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos* by Rodolfo Acuña (1988); *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th-Century America* by Ronald T. Takaki (1979); and *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* by Paul Gunn Allen (1986) are examples of important scholarship that has provided significant new perspectives on the experiences of ethnic groups in the United States and has helped us to transform our conceptions about the experiences of American ethnic groups. Readers acquainted with this scholarship will note that transformative scholarship has been produced by both European-American and ethnic minority scholars.

I will discuss two examples of how the new scholarship in ethnic studies has questioned traditional interpretations

Students should be given opportunities to investigate and determine how cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and the biases within a discipline influence the ways knowledge is constructed.

and stimulated a search for new explanations and paradigms since the 1950s. Since the pioneering work of E. Franklin Frazier (1939), social scientists had accepted the notion that the slave experience had destroyed the Black family and that the destruction of the African American family continued in the post-World War II period during Black migration to and settlement in northern cities. Moynihan (1965), in his controversial book, *The Negro Family in America: The Case for National Action,* used the broken Black family explanation in his analysis. Gutman (1976), in an important historical study of the African American family from 1750 to 1925, concluded that "despite a high rate of earlier involuntary marital breakup, large numbers of slave couples lived in long marriages, and most slaves lived in double-headed households" (p. xxii).

An important group of African and African American scholars have challenged established interpretations about the origin of Greek civilization and the extent to which Greek civilization was influenced by African cultures. These scholars include Diop (1974), Williams (1987), and Van Sertima (1988, 1989). Cheikh Anta Diop is one of the most influential African scholars who has challenged established interpretations about the origin of Greek civilization. In *Black Nations and Culture,* published in 1955 (summarized by Van Sertima, 1989), he sets forth an important thesis that states that Africa is an important root of Western civilization. Diop argues that Egypt "was the node and center of a vast web linking the strands of cultures and languages; that the light that crystallized at the center of this early world had been energized by the cultural electricity streaming from the heartland of Africa" (p. 8).

Since the work by Diop, Williams, and Van Sertima, traditional interpretations about the formation of Greek civilization has been challenged by Bernal (1987–1991), a professor of government at Cornell University. The earlier challenges

to established interpretations by African and African Americans received little attention, except within the African American community. However, Bernal's work has received wide attention in the popular press and among classicists.

Bernal (1987–1991) argues that important aspects of Greek civilization originated in ancient Egypt and Phoenicia and that the ancient civilization of Egypt was essentially African. Bernal believes that the contributions of Egypt and Phoenicia to Greek civilization have been deliberately ignored by classical scholars because of their biased attitudes toward non-White peoples and Semites. Bernal has published two of four planned volumes of his study *Black Athena*. In Volume 2 he uses evidence from linguistics, archeology and ancient documents to substantiate his claim that "between 2100 and 1100 B.C., when Greek culture was born, the people of the Aegean borrowed, adapted or had thrust upon them deities and language, technologies and architectures, notions of justice and polis" from Egypt and Phoenicia (Begley, Chideya, & Wilson, 1991, p. 50). Because transformative academic knowledge, such as that constructed by Diop, Williams, Van Sertima, and Bernal, challenges the established paradigms as well as because of the tremendous gap between academic knowledge and school knowledge, it often has little influence on school knowledge.

School Knowledge

School knowledge consists of the facts, concepts, and generalizations presented in textbooks, teachers' guides, and the other forms of media designed for school use. School knowledge also consists of the teacher's mediation and interpretation of that knowledge. The textbook is the main source of school knowledge in the United States (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Goodlad, 1984; Shaver, Davis, & Helburn, 1979). Studies of textbooks indicate that these are some of the major themes in school knowledge (Anyon, 1979, 1981; Sleeter & Grant, 1991b): (a) America's founding fathers, such as Washington and Jefferson, were highly moral, liberty-loving men who championed equality and justice for all Americans; (b) the United States is a nation with justice, liberty, and freedom for all; (c) social class divisions are not significant issues in the United States; (d) there are no significant gender, class, or racial divisions within U.S. society; and (e) ethnic groups of color and Whites interact largely in harmony in the United States.

Studies of textbooks that have been conducted by researchers such as Anyon (1979, 1981) and Sleeter and Grant (1991b) indicate that textbooks present a highly selective view of social reality, give students the idea that knowledge is static rather than dynamic, and encourage students to master isolated facts rather than to develop complex understandings of social reality. These studies also indicate that textbooks reinforce the dominant social, economic, and power arrangements within society. Students are encouraged to accept rather than to question these arrangements.

In their examination of the treatment of race, class, gender, and disability in textbooks, Sleeter and Grant (1991b) concluded that although textbooks had largely eliminated sexist language and had incorporated images of ethnic minorities into them, they failed to help students to develop an understanding of the complex cultures of ethnic groups, an understanding of racism, sexism and classism in American society, and described the United States as a nation that had largely overcome its problems. Sleeter & Grant write:

> The vision of social relations that the textbooks we analyzed for the most part project is one of harmony and equal opportunity—anyone can do or become whatever he or she wants; problems among people are mainly individual in nature and in the end are resolved. (p. 99)

A number of powerful factors influence the development and production of school textbooks (Altbach, Kelly, Petrie, & Weis, 1991; FitzGerald, 1979). One of the most important is the publisher's perception of statements and images that might be controversial. When textbooks become controversial, school districts often refuse to adopt and to purchase them. When developing a textbook, the publisher and the authors must also consider the developmental and reading levels of the students, state and district guidelines about what subject matter textbooks should include, and recent trends and developments in a content field that teachers and administrators will expect the textbook to reflect and incorporate. Because of the number of constraints and influences on the development of textbooks, school knowledge often does not include in-depth discussions and analyses of some of the major problems in American society, such as racism, sexism, social-class stratification, and poverty (Anyon, 1979, 1981; Sleeter & Grant, 1991b). Consequently, school knowledge is influenced most heavily by mainstream academic knowledge and popular knowledge. Transformative academic knowledge usually has little direct influence on school knowledge. It usually affects school knowledge in a significant way only after it has become a part of mainstream and popular knowledge. Teachers must make special efforts to introduce transformative knowledge and perspectives to elementary and secondary school students.

Teaching Implications

Multicultural education involves changes in the total school environment in order to create equal educational opportunities for all students (Banks, 1991; Banks & Banks, 1989; Sleeter & Grant, 1987). However, in this article I have focused on only one of the important dimensions of multicultural education—the kinds of *knowledge* that should be taught in the multicultural curriculum. The five types of knowledge described above have important implications for planning and teaching a multicultural curriculum.

An important goal of multicultural teaching is to help students to understand how knowledge is constructed. Students should be given opportunities to investigate and determine how cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and the biases within a discipline influence the ways the knowledge is constructed. Students should also be given opportunities to create knowledge themselves and identify ways in which the knowledge they construct is influenced and limited by their personal assumptions, positions, and experiences.

I will use a unit on the Westward Movement to illustrate how teachers can use the knowledge categories described above to teach from a multicultural perspective. When beginning the unit, teachers can draw upon the students' personal and cultural knowledge about the Westward Movement. They can ask the students to make a list of ideas that come to mind when they think of "The West." To enable the students to determine how the popular culture depicts the West, teachers can ask the students to view and analyze the film discussed above, *How the West Was Won*. They can

also ask them to view videos of more recently made films about the West and to make a list of its major themes and images. Teachers can summarize Turner's frontier theory to give students an idea of how an influential mainstream historian described and interpreted the West in the late 19th century and how this theory influenced generations of historians.

Teachers can present a transformative perspective on the West by showing the students the film *How the West Was Won and Honor Lost*, narrated by Marlon Brando. This film describes how the European Americans who went West, with the use of broken treaties and deceptions, invaded the land of the Indians and displaced them. Teachers may also ask the students to view segments of the popular film *Dances With Wolves* and to discuss how the depiction of Indians in this film reflects both mainstream and transformative perspectives on Indians in U.S. history and culture. Teachers can present the textbook account of the Westward Movement in the final part of the unit.

The main goals of presenting different kinds of knowledge are to help students understand how knowledge is constructed and how it reflects the social context in which it is created and to enable them to develop the understandings and skills needed to become knowledge builders themselves. An important goal of multicultural education is to transform the school curriculum so that students not only learn the knowledge that has been constructed by others, but learn how to critically analyze the knowledge they master and how to construct their own interpretations of the past, present, and future.

Several important factors related to teaching the types of knowledge have not been discussed in this article but need to be examined. One is the personal/cultural knowledge of the classroom teacher. The teachers, like the students, bring understandings, concepts, explanations, and interpretations to the classroom that result from their experiences in their homes, families, and community cultures. Most teachers in the United States are European American (87%) and female (72%) (Ordovensky, 1992). However, there is enormous diversity among European Americans that is mirrored in the backgrounds of the teacher population, including diversity related to religion, social class, region, and ethnic origin. The diversity within European Americans is rarely discussed in the social science literature (Alba, 1990) or within classrooms. However, the rich diversity among the cultures of teachers is an important factor that needs to be examined and discussed in the classroom. The 13% of U.S. teachers who are ethnic minorities can also enrich their classrooms by sharing their personal and cultural knowledge with their students and by helping them to understand how it mediates textbook knowledge. The multicultural classroom is a forum of multiple voices and perspectives. The voices of the teacher, of the textbook, of mainstream and transformative authors—and of the students—are important components of classroom discourse.

Teachers can share their cultural experiences and interpretations of events as a way to motivate students to share theirs. However, they should examine their racial and ethnic attitudes toward diverse groups before engaging in cultural sharing. A democratic classroom atmosphere must also be created. The students must view the classroom as a forum where multiple perspectives are valued. An open and democratic classroom will enable students to acquire the skills and abilities they need to examine conflicting knowledge claims and perspectives. Students must become critical consumers of knowledge as well as knowledge producers if they are to acquire the understandings and skills needed to function in the complex and diverse world of tomorrow. Only a broad and liberal multicultural education can prepare them for that world.

Notes

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SIGs Call for Papers—Additions

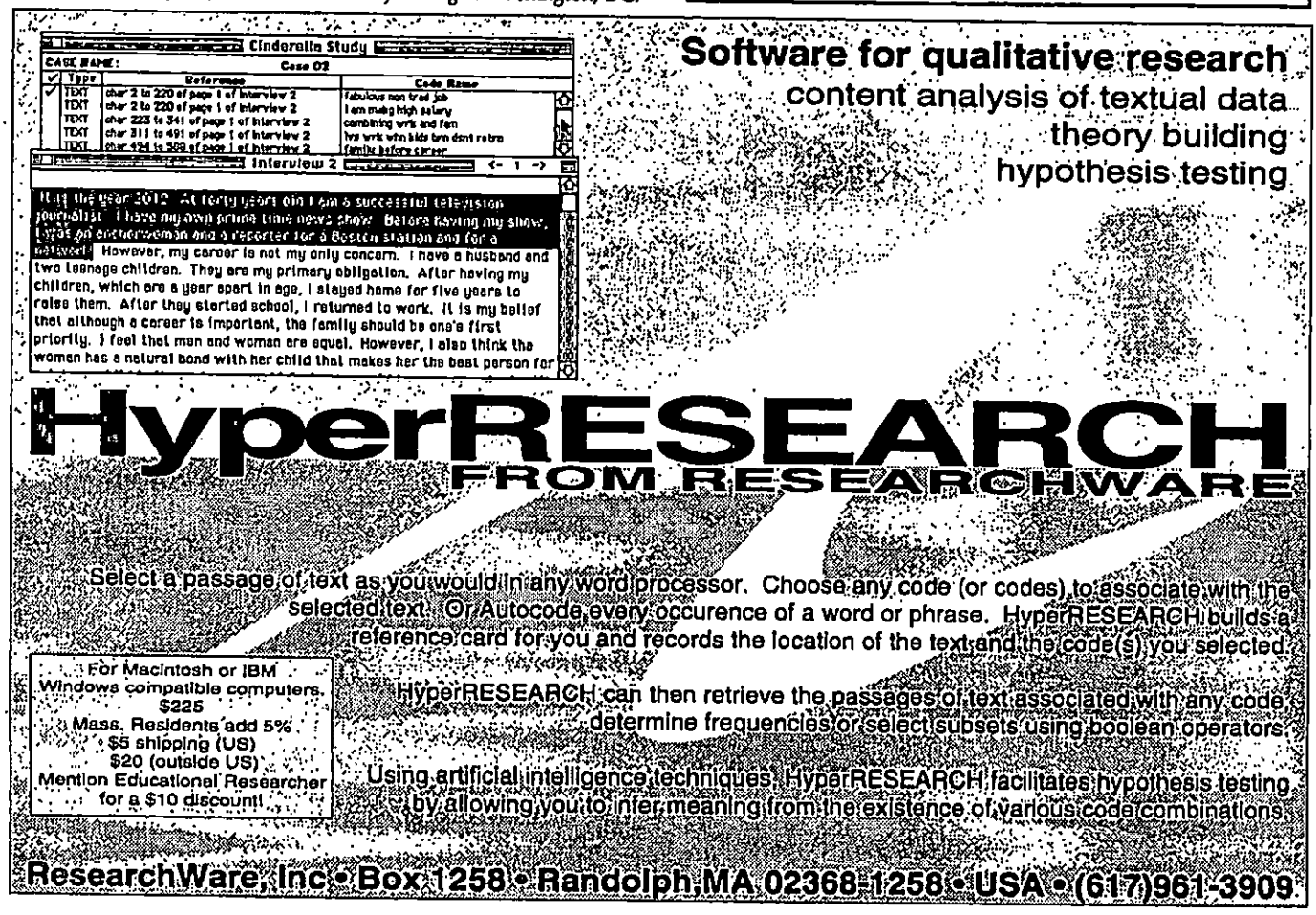
The following Special Interest Groups are being added to the list of SIGs that will accept proposals in response to the Call for Papers (May 1993):

Basic Research in Reading and Literacy, Rosalind Horowitz, Reading and Literacy Education Program, The University of Texas–San Antonio, San Antonio, TX 78249-0654.

Occupational Stress and Health, Susan D. Lopez, International Center on Deafness, Gallaudet University, 800 Florida Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002.

Teaching and Learning in Physical Education, Mark Byra, Dept. of Physical Education, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY 82070.

Writing, Martin Nystrand, Department of English, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706.



Challenging the Myths

By Carl A. Grant

Multiculturalism is becoming pervasive in most aspect of our lives because of a significant shift in the sociological paradigm of the United States. This shift has been created by three major forces.

The foremost of these forces is the changing population demographics of our nation. The population of the United States has increased more than 10 percent since 1980: there are now nearly 250 million people living in this country. Forty percent of the increase is due to immigration, mainly from Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. In addition, the birth rate of women of color is on the rise. The Population Reference Bureau has projected that by the year 2080 the United States may well be 24 percent Latino, 15 percent African American, and 12 percent Asian American. In other words, within the next 90 years, the white population may become a "minority."

The face of the workforce is also changing. The ethnic breakdown of the workforce in 1988 was: 41 percent native white males; 33 percent native white females; 10 percent native males of color; 9 percent native females of color; 4 percent immigrant males; and 3 percent immigrant females. The projections for workers entering the workforce between 1989 and 2000 are: 28 percent native white females; 21 percent native females of color; 21 percent native males of color; 12 percent immigrant males; 9 percent immigrant females; and 9 percent native white males (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1993).

Finally, our national ethic is changing from "individual" centeredness to the acceptance and affirmation of both groups and individuals. The rugged hard-working individual since colonial times has been portrayed as the hero and the contibutor to this country. The 1960s witnessed the rise and identification with groups—*e.g.*, ethnic/racial, women, lesbian and gay, physically challenged, and the poor. All of these groups demanded fairness and justice within and throughout all of society's formal and informal structures.

With the increasing pervasiveness of multicultural education have come myths, especially about what it is and what isn't. These myths often serve to impede or halt the progress of multicultural education. Consequently, important to challenging and correcting these myths is first providing a definition of multicultural education that can frame and provide a context for espousing these myths.

Definition of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is a philosophical concept and an educational process. It is a concept built upon the philosophical ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity that are contained in United States documents such as the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. It recognizes, however, that equality and equity are not the same thing: equal access does not necessarily guarantee fairness.

Multicultural education is a process that takes place in schools and other educational institutions and informs all academic disciplines and others aspects of the curriculum. It prepares all students to work actively toward structural equality in the organizations and institutions of the United States. It helps students to develop positive self-concepts and to discover who they are, particularly in terms of their multiple group memberships. Multicultural education does this by providing knowledge about the history, culture, and contributions of the diverse groups that have shaped the history, politics, and culture of the United States.

Multicultural education acknowledges that the strength and richness of the United

About Multicultural Education

States lies in its human diversity. It demands a school staff that is multiracial and multiculturally literate, and that includes staff members who are fluent in more than one language. It demands a curriculum that organizes concepts and content around the contributions, perspectives, and experiences of the myriad of groups that are part of United States society. It confronts and seeks to bring about change of current social issues involving race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, and disability. It accomplishes this by providing instruction in a context that students are familiar with, and builds upon students' diverse learning styles. It teaches critical-thinking skills, as well as democratic decision making, social action, and empowerment skills. Finally, multicultural education is a total process; it cannot be truncated: all components of its definition must be in place in order for multicultural education to be genuine and viable.

This definition, I believe, encapsulates the articulated and published ideas and beliefs of many multicultural scholars, and is not far removed from what many other multiculturalists believe multicultural education to be.

Six Myths About Multicultural Education

There are numerous myths about multicultural education. The ones that are most frequently voiced are:

(1) It is both divisive and so conceptually weak that it does little to eliminate structural inequalities;
(2)It is unnecessary because the United States is a melting pot;
(3) Multiculturalism—and by extension multicultural education—and political correctness are the same thing;
(4) Multicultural education rejects the notion of a common culture;
(5) Multicultural education is a "minority thing;" and
(6) Multicultural education will impede learning the basic skills. These six myths will be the focus of my discussion.

Myth 1:
Multicultual education is divisive, and/or multicultural education is a weak educational concept that does not attempt to eliminate structural inequalities.

As multicultural education has grown as a philosophy and a practice, critics representing both radical and conservatives ideologies have opposed it.

Radical critics argue that multicultural education emphasizes individual choice over collective solidarity (Olneck, 1990); that it neglects to critique systems of oppression like race or class (Mattai, 1992) and structural inequalities; that it emphasizes "culture" over "race" (Jan Mohamed & Lloyd, 1987). Radical critics also argue that multicultural education's major purpose is to advocate prejudice reduction as a solution to inequality. Therefore, they argue, its purpose is naive and misdirected.

Conservative critics of multicultural education argue that the United States has always been "multicultural" so there is, in fact, no controversy. Ravitch (1990) writes, "The real issue on campus and in the classroom is not whether there will be multiculturalism, but what kind of multiculturalism will there be" (p. A44). Ravitch is against "particularism," *i.e.*, multicultual education that is defined as African American-centric, Arab American-centric, Latino-centric, and/or gender-centric.

Similarly, E. D. Hirsh (1987) believes that there is value in multicultural education because it "inoculates tolerance and provides a perspective on our own tradi-

tions and values." However, he adds, "It should not be allowed to supplant or interfere with our schools' responsibility to insure our children's mastery of American literate culture" (p. 18).

Although these conservative critics believe in multicultural education, their vision of multicultual education is one that adheres to traditional Western thought and ideology and seeks to perpetuate institutions as they presently exist.

Also, since many conservative critics believe that there is already adequate attention given to race, class, and gender in American life, they have harsh criticisms for proponents of multicultual education. They argue that multicultural education is a movement by a "cult" (Siegel, 1991), or it is ideas from former radical protesters of the 1960s (D'Souza, 1991). Further, these conservative critics argue that multi-cultural education is divisive (Balch, 1992; D'Souza, 1991), and that too much attention is given to race and ethnicity. The multicultural education now being proposed, they argue, will "disunite America" (Schlesinger, 1991) and lead to "balkanization" or "tribalism."

Both radical and conservative critics of multicultural education often leave their research skills, scholarship, and willingness to conduct a thorough review of the educational literature at the academy door. Most radical critiques of multicultural education seem to be written after reading (not studying) a few limited selections from the multicultural literature. For example, some (*e.g.*, Olneck, 1990) claim that dominant versions of multicultural education are divorced from sociopolitical interests, and that multicultural scholars see ethnic conflict as the result of negative attitudes and ignorance about manifestations of difference, which can be resolved by cultivating empathy, appreciation, and understanding.

It is for certain that these critics have not examined the work of Nieto (1992), Banks (1991), Banks and Banks (1989), Gay (1986), Gollnick and Chinn (1994), Grant (1988), Sleeter and Grant (1988) and Sleeter (1993). These authors point out that people of color, women, the disabled, and the poor are oppressed by racism, sexism, and classism, and that one goal of multicultural education is to empower students so that they may have the courage, knowledge, and wisdom to control their life circumstances and transform society.

Some of the radical scholars (*e.g.* McCarthy, 1990a) mainly quote from earlier publications on multicultural education, ignoring the context of time in which these publications were written, ignoring the conceptual evolution of multicultural education, and ignoring the more recent essays on multicultural education. Also, these critics seem to read what they wish into the writings on multicultural education. For example, McCarthy (1990b) compares the argument put forth in Sleeter and Grant's (1989) "Education That Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist" approach to one of crosscultural competence for enhancing minority negotiation with mainstream society (p.49). This is difficult to understand, because a good deal of this approach is concerned with providing students with strategies for social action and developing self-empowerment (Sleeter & Grant, 1988, p. 201).

These misinterpretations of multicultual education by radical and conservative critics lead to continuous controversy, and undercut the influence that multicultural education can have on society. Paul Robeson Jr. (1993) tells us:

> The controversy over multiculturalism is not, as many claim, merely a manifestation of the politics of race and gender; rather, it is at the heart of a profound ideological struggle over the values of American culture and the nature of U. S. civilization. Above all it is a debate about whether the melting-pot culture, which is the foundation of the American way of life and imposes its Anglo-Saxon Protestant values on our society, should be replaced by a mosaic culture incorporating the values of the diverse groups that make up America's population. (p.1)

This statement by Robeson provides an excellent response to the conservative critics, but I believe the radical critics have somewhat of a different problem. Their problem is one of a need to understand that many multicultural educators are not simply interested in an education that will lead to the assimilation of student into society as it presently exists. Many multicultural educators are interested in changing the knowledge and power equation so that race, class, and gender groups that have previously been marginalized have equity and equality in all the structures of society.

Myth 2:
The United States is a Melting Pot for all U.S. citizens.

An increasing number of people are coming to the realization that the United States never was a melting pot. The argument they put forth is that people of color have not been able to "melt," and other groups, such as women, the physically challenged, lesbians and gay men, and the poor, have not been fully accepted into the mainstream of American society. Many realities—the glass ceiling in corporate America that prevents women and people of color from reaching top leadership positions; inequities in pay between men and women and between people of color and white people; the lockout of women, people of color, and the poor from much of the political system; and the increasing slide of the United States into a two-class society of "haves and have nots"—invalidate the melting pot thesis.

Robeson explains that the melting-pot is based upon the denial of group rights and a one-sided emphasis on "radical individualism," whereas the mosaic culture affirms group rights along with individual rights and emphasizes a balance between individual liberty and individual responsibility to the community. Robeson further adds:

> This difference underlies the conflicts between the melting pot and the mosaic over the issue of race, ethnicity, gender, and class, since the melting pot has traditionally used the denial of group rights to subordinate non Anglo-Saxon White ethnic groups, non-White, White women, and those who do not own property (*i.e.*, people who do not belong to the middle or upper class). (p.3)

Myth 3:
Multicultural Education and Political Correctness are the same thing.

Multicultural education is not a synonym for "political correctness." Many, educators and other members of society unknowingly connect Political Correctness to multicultural education. Hughes (1993) states:

> Much mud has been stirred up by the linkage of multiculturalism with political correctness. This has turned what ought to be a generous recognition of cultural diversity into a worthless symbolic program, clogged with lumped-radical jargon. Its offshoot is the rhetoric of cultural separatism. (p.83)

Political correctness, it is argued, is about doing the proper thing. Hughes (1993) also, says it is "political etiquette." Some conservative critics argue that political correctness is about speech repression. For example, penalizing students for using certain words on campus, that they would not be penalized for if they used these same words off campus. Cortes (1991), an observer of social history, explains:

> ...some campuses have instituted ill-conceived speech codes that have reached ludicrous extremes of attempting to micro-manage the "unacceptable." Such action have had the unfortunate side effect of trivializing the critical issue of continuing campus bigotry, while at the same time casting a pall on the entire higher educational struggle against prejudice and for multicultural understanding.... (p.13)

Repressing the use of speech, or limiting the books that make up the "canon," leads many—especially those who are opposed to multicultural education, or who are unsure about its meaning—to view multicultural education and political correctness as one in the same. An example may help to illuminate this point.

I was recently told that many P. C. advocates would probably ban or discourage the reading of *Huckleberry Finn*. I was then asked what would I, an advocate of multicultural education, do about the use of this American classic in schools. My reply was that *Huckleberry Finn*, or *Tom Sawyer*, can be read but in so doing needs to be read in a "context." By context, I mean the teacher leading the discussion should have experience teaching from a multicultural perspective. This would include having introduced the students (before the reading of *Huckleberry Finn*) to a variety of literature, some of which features African Americans as heroes and heroines; some of which has explained the historical meaning of words and terms; some of which included a rounded view of other ethnic groups, including whites. I would also add that the sequencing of *Huckleberry Finn* is important. It may not be wise to have it as the first book the class reads. It should be read after a positive climate is established, and students have developed an attitude of sensitivity and respect for each other within groups and across groups.

Garcia and Pugh (1992) claim that "political correctness" serves the purpose of defining a political and intellectual perspective as an aberrant ideology and then attacking it as indoctrination" (p. 216). When multicultural education is reduced to P. C., Garcia and Pugh (1992) argue, "[it] undercuts the validity of pluralism as a universally shared experience," and I would add it minimizes the importance of women, the poor, the physically challenged, and lesbians and gay men.

Myth 4:
Multicultural Education Reject a Common Culture.

Multicultural education offers a way to achieve the **common** culture that doesn't presently exist. We all are aware that the United States is a land of many people, most of whose foreparents came from other countries, bringing different languages, customs, and religious beliefs. We are also aware that the United States' strength and humanity come from its diverse people. Additionally, we are aware that from this "diversity" it is important that we create a "oneness" or a common culture. Peter Erickson, using the canon as the context for his argument, offers four reasons why multiculturalism is not fraying America, and why it can help us the achieve a common culture.

First, Erickson (1991) argues that traditionalists view the canon as made up of diverse, inconsistent elements, but whole in the sense of being conceived as a single entity. He states, "The basic unit of organization is single authors, however diverse; their diversity is expressed through the framework of a single literary tradition" (p. B2). Multicultural education, on the other hand, supports the acceptance and affirmation of multiple traditions. Erickson writes, "In a multicultural approach, the basic organizational component is not individual authors, but multiple traditions. Diversity is thus placed on a different conceptual foundation. This foundation implies that each minority tradition is a distinct cultural entity that cannot be dissolved into an overarching common tradition through the catalytic action of adding one or two minority authors to the established canon."

Second, multicultural education expands the idea of what constitutes "valid criticism." Criticism is not confined to the rules laid out by established classical authors. Erickson argues:

> Multicultural criticism...recognizes the possibility of a sharp criticism of Shakespeare that cuts through the mantle of his established position. Such criticism does not seek to eject Shakespeare from the canon, but proposes that Shakespeare no longer be viewed as an inviolable fixture. (p.B2)

Third, multiculturalists do not reject the idea of a common culture, as many opponents of multicultural education claim. Instead, "it [multiculturalism] opposes the traditionalist way of constructing a common culture through over-simplified appeals to a common heritage achieved by applying the principles of universalism and transcendence to peoples's differences" (p. B2). Erickson argues that for the multiculturalists, "common culture is not a given: it has to be created anew by engaging the cultural differences that are part of American Life" (p. B2).

Fourth, the common reader for the multiculturalist is shaped by "identity politics." In other words, the identity of the reader(s) needs to be taken into account if we are to understand the culture we hold in common. Similarly, race, class, and gender are active factors that must be acknowledged and deemed important to understanding and interpretations.

Myth 5:
Multicultural education is a "minority thing"

Many teachers and teacher educators see multicultural education as a "minority thing." They see it as mainly related to the school experiences of people of color. It is seen as an educational plan to help enhance the self-concept of students of color, especially African-American and Hispanic students, who many educators believe come to school with a negative self-image. Also, it is viewed as an educational plan to help manage the behavior of these same students. Additionally, it is regarded as a curriculum innovation that seeks to include the culture and history of underrepresented groups in the American expererience.

Conversely, multicultural education is not seen as important and necessary for whites. One reason for this is that many whites see the focus of multicultural as mainly race, and "race" is perceived narrowly as a "black or brown" problem—a problem that black and brown people need to overcome (Omi &Howard, 1986). Often forgotten is the United States' history of slavery and discrimination and the need for whites to understand how they contribute to everyday racism (Essed, 1990). Although the social science literature is replete with arguments that "race" (and racism) is very much the white man's problem, and that its evilness works against **all** of United States' society (Myrdal, 1944; Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968; Tocqueville 1969), this point is too often ignored (Omi & Winant, 1986; Ringer & Lawless, 1989).

Also ignored when race is seen as the only foundational pillar of multicultural education is the attention scholars of multicultural education gave to discussing socio-economic class issues (*e.g.*, control of wealth in society, discussion of the causes of poverty and homelessness), gender (*e.g.*, the gender-based glass ceiling in corporate America, treatment of girls in math and science class), disability (*e.g.*, the isolation or absence of the physically challenged in the classroom and at school events).

Additionally, when multicultural education is seen as only a "minority thing"

whites are mis-educated. They are inclined to develop ethnocentric and prejudicial attitudes toward people of color when they are deprived of the opportunity to learn about the sociocultural, economic, and psychological factors that produce conditions of ethnic polarization, racial unrest, and hate crimes. As a result, they do not understand their responsibility to participate in eliminating the "isms" (Miel, 1967; Suzuke, 1979).

Further, when multicultural education is seen as a minority thing, the importance of analyzing the impact of race, class, and gender interactions which are important to multicultural education research is ignored or understated. For example, Grant and Sleeter (1986) reported that studies of cooperative learning that mainly paid attention to one status group (race) oversimplified the behavior analysis, and this oversimplification could contribute to perpetuation of gender and class basis. Similarly, (Bossard, 1994) discusses the importance of studying the interaction effects of race, class, and gender over time in order to understand and break down the negative institutionalized patterns of social life in school.

Myth 6:
Multicultural education will impede the teaching of the basics and preparation of students to live in a global technological society.

Learning the basics and being able to apply them to real life situations is essential to any quality educational program, and the purpose of multicultural educa-

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tion is to provide a high quality educational program for all students. Multicultural education includes curriculum and instructional approaches that place learning in a context that challenges students, while at the same time allowing them to have some familiarity with the learning context and the purpose for learning the content being taught (Gay, 1990; Trueba, 1991).

Much of the early multicultural curriculum in the 1970s and the early 1980s dealt with how to help teachers include or integrate multicultural education into the subject matter they teach daily. Reading and social studies especially received multicultural attention (Banks, 1979: Grant, 1977). More recently, beginning in the late 1980s, materials have been readily available to help teachers understand how to make their science and mathematics relate to their students' thinking and conceptual understanding (*e.g.*, Grant & Sleeter, 1989; Fennema and Franke, 1992)

The integration of multicultural education throughout the entire curriculum and instructional process is advocated to encourage students to learn the basics, understand that mathematics and science are tools that they can command, and that what they learn should give them greater control of their destiny.

Also important to multicultural education is developing the ability to listen to, appreciate, and critique different voices and stories. Development of these abilities, along with gaining an appreciation for differences, is essential to being able to successful live in the 21st century. Hughes (1993) reminds us:

> The future of America, in a globalized economy without a Cold War, will lie with people who can think and act with informed grace across ethnic, cultural, linguistic lines. (p.26)

Finally, it is clear that multicultural education is being challenged, but we should not be dismayed or discouraged by this challenge. Just a few years ago, only a few people were seriously discussing multicultural education or paying attention to its potential and possibilities. Positive circumstances and events for multicultural education are happening all across the United States. For example, the State of Maryland has recently passed a law for education in the State entitled "Education That Is Multicultural."

Finally, it is important to remember the words of Frederick Douglass:

> If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lighting. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand.

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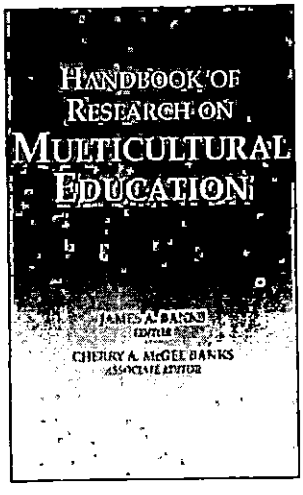

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Re-imagining multicultural education: new visions, new possibilities*

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ABSTRACT
In this article, Sonia Nieto reflects on the heretofore known history of multicultural education since its beginnings in the early 1970s, with a focus in the United States. She then reviews what has been missing from this rendering and suggests what it might mean, in the current sociopolitical context, to imagine new possibilities for the field, including new voices, new visions, and new contexts. Using her research and that of others, she then explores what it would mean to re-imagine multicultural education in a global context for students, teachers, families, schools, and nations.

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The field now called multicultural education has been around in the United States for just under half a century. Its immediate predecessors were the intergroup relations movement (Banks, C.A.M. 2005; Taba & Van Til, 1946), ethnic studies (Banks, 1973), and multiethnic education (Banks, Cortés, Gay, Garcia, & Ochoa, 1976). Multicultural education as a separate field began in earnest in the early 1970s as a result of increased attention by African American and other scholars to the education of African American and other students of color who had long been poorly served by public schools (Baratz & Baratz, 1970; Gay, 1971; Sizemore, 1972).

The immediate antecedents of multicultural education do not, however, tell the entire story. Its emergence was foreshadowed by a long history of social movements for equity and social justice including abolition, universal suffrage, and protests against Nativism and the xenophobic treatment of Indigenous people, immigrants, and others. "Liberty and justice for all," although a noble ideal, has always proven elusive. Gunnar Myrdal (1944), in a groundbreaking study of the lives of African Americans in the 1940s, articulated this reality as the quintessential "American dilemma," that is, the juxtaposition of the ideals of equality and fairness with the ugly realities of slavery, White supremacy, and the subjugation of women, African Americans, Indigenous Americans, working class people, and immigrants.

Nowadays there is some recognition of the role played by African American intellectual giants involved in the struggle for equality in civic life, including in education. These included Du Bois (1935) and Woodson (1933). But many who played a part, African American and

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others, are still largely invisible and unacknowledged in the academic literature. A recent groundbreaking book addressing this serious flaw chronicles the many conflicts, tensions, and contributions of people of color to the field of curriculum and, thus, to education in general (Au, Brown, & Calderón, 2016). Another recent book describes the contribution of Latin@s in the Civil Rights Movement, particularly in public education (Colón-Muñíz & Lavadenz, 2016). Much more scholarly research is needed in this area to tell a more complete and accurate history of education in the United States.

Multicultural education and the quest for educational equity

Education has been a significant part of the "American dilemma" described by Myrdal (1944) because equal education has been just as elusive as equal justice, equal voting rights, and equal opportunity in general. Thus, multicultural education was an attempt to change the educational outcomes of African American and other children long denied an equal education. In order to do so, it had to challenge the deficit discourses that rendered communities of color – especially African American, Latino/a, American Indian, and some Asian American groups – as lacking in culture, devaluing education, and as completely responsible for the educational failure of its children. These disparaging discourses described children as "culturally deprived" and their families as living in a "culture of poverty" (see, for example, Bereiter & Engelmann, 1966; Bloom, Davis, & Hess, 1965; Lewis, 1965; Riessman, 1962). What was missing in this discourse was a recognition of the institutional policies and practices – including vastly unequal resources, a Eurocentric curriculum, teachers who were poorly prepared to teach students of diverse backgrounds and, of course, racism and other biases – that made educational inequality a natural outcome for large segments of the population.

By the mid-1960s, the sociopolitical landscape of life in the United States began to change as a result of numerous forces, including the Civil Rights movement with its demands for equal opportunity in all aspects of civil life, as well as more radical demands for racial and economic justice, and widespread public opposition to the Vietnam War. Consequently, by the early 1970s, activists and scholars were challenging conventional explanations for the causes of educational inequality. A particularly insightful critique came from sociologist William Ryan, author of *Blaming the Victim* (1971), who famously wrote,

> We are dealing, it would seem, not so much with culturally deprived children as with culturally depriving schools. And the task to be accomplished is not to revise, amend, and repair deficient children, but to alter and transform the atmosphere and operations of the schools to which we commit these children. (p. 61)

Multicultural education grew out of this context. Principally inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, it catapulted the quest for educational justice to the forefront of civic life in the early 1970s.

It is no surprise, then, that backlash and controversy have followed multicultural education from its very beginnings (Sleeter, 1995a). This is because, at its core, multicultural education is a direct challenge to public education's Eurocentric focus and curriculum, as well as to the starkly uneven outcomes of education that have been particularly onerous for children whose race, ethnicity, native language, and social class differ from the majority group. Now, new and critical voices were contesting the previously agreed-upon notion of what it meant to be an educated person. Communities of color and others were no longer content with a curriculum limited to Shakespeare, Faulkner, and Hemingway; the new curricula now would

include Morrison, Neruda, and Bulosan, among many others. Marginalized people and their allies were insisting that history could no longer simply be about the exploits, conquests, and achievements of Europeans and White Americans; it now had to include as well the study of Brown and Black and working-class people, and of imperialism, colonization, and exploitation. Multicultural education also challenged *how* education was done, and *who* benefited, and *why*. It was, in a word, a direct affront to the notion of White supremacy.

In spite of the continuing controversy that has characterized it, multicultural education took hold in the 1980s and 1990s and the field has established itself as a serious scholarly endeavor with a sound theoretical foundation and solid research base (see, for example, Banks, 2009; Banks & Banks, 1995, 2004). I have written about this history previously (Nieto, 2009). Similar movements were also starting in other Western nations, particularly in Great Britain, Canada, and Australia (for a review of multicultural education in these and other nations, see Banks, 2009).

A changing sociopolitical context

US schools and society have both undergone immense changes in the years since multicultural education first appeared on the scene. For example, the nature of the US population has changed considerably from one that was overwhelmingly European American to one that is increasingly multiethnic, multiracial, and multicultural. But unlike previous waves of immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, new immigrants are coming not from Europe but mostly from Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and several Asian and South Asian nations. This new diversity has implications for US classrooms whether they are in large urban centers, suburbs, or rural areas. Moreover, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by 2043, people of color will outnumber Whites, and that by 2060, one in three residents will be Hispanic (U.S. Census, 2012).

Public schools have also changed a great deal, with children of color now outnumbering White children in most urban areas and even in urbanized suburbs and some suburbs. In fact, currently the majority of one- and two-year olds in the nation are children of color, and by 2019, it is estimated that they will be the majority of all children in US schools (Children's Defense Fund's, 2014). At the same time, and in spite of the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) Supreme Court ruling outlawing so-called "separate but equal" schools for White and Black children, a 2014 report from the Civil Rights Project found that public schools in some parts of the nation have experienced an unprecedented backslide toward de facto "separate and unequal" education, this in spite of the fact that a 2014 study found that integrated schools have been found to have "substantial benefits for educational and later life outcomes for students from all backgrounds" (Orfield, Frankenberg, Ee, & Kuscera, 2014, p. 2). The news was not all negative, however. The report also found that in the US South, the region that was the most segregated prior to the Brown decision, the backslide has not been as dramatic. That is, schools in the South are now the least segregated of all regions in the country. At the same time, the most segregated regions are in the North and West, and Hispanics are the most segregated of all students by both ethnicity and social class.

Globalization, with its cataclysmic changes including vastly increasing immigration and economic exploitation, has also had an impact on education around the world (Spring, 2014; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014). Wars, invasions, and other civil disturbances have also contributed to mass migration and to an unprecedented number of refugees entering other

nations. These movements are having a dramatic effect on classrooms and schools around the world, including in the United States.

Since the mid-1980s, massive privatization, marketization, and standardization have also characterized public schools, and they too have changed the nature of education in the United States as well as in other nations (Apple, 2009). A mindset that views education as simply another commodity foreshadows unsettling problems for public schools, and some of these are already evident. Vouchers and charter schools, the primary examples of privatization, are now a fact of life throughout the country. As a consequence, they are changing education from a public enterprise to a moneymaking scheme, with little consideration for the "public good." Writing about how this problem has manifested itself in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, what she calls an "iconic American city," Barbara Miner has written, "In the current debates on vouchers, there is strikingly little discussion between democratic values, the common good, and public education" (Miner, 2013, p. 174).

Standardization has taken root in the United States through federal initiatives such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Law (2001), followed in 2009 by Race to the Top (RTTT), both of which required massive testing of students in a number of content areas. Supposedly meant to raise standards and help close the "achievement gap" between White and some Asian American students (the highest achieving groups) and Black, Hispanic, Native American, and other Asian American and Pacific Islander students such as Cambodians and Laotians (the lowest achieving groups), it has led instead to higher dropout rates among the latter, with little or no improvement in achievement (Berliner & Glass, 2014). While these initiatives were a boon for testing and publishing companies, they did little to improve the education of the most marginalized students in US schools. One of the consequences of such initiatives is that multicultural education has often been placed on the back burner as states demanded that teachers and schools instead focus on teaching test-taking skills and the low-level knowledge that is frequently found on such tests. With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, there is some hope that more attention will now be paid to actual teaching and learning rather than the singular focus on testing, but it is too early to tell what the outcome of the new law will be.

The ideals of democracy have been challenged as a result of some of these changes. John Dewey, the father of progressive education in the United States, would probably find it hard to recognize schools today. Despite important positive changes in such areas as access to education for a much broader segment of the population than ever, as well as improvements in technology, and the professionalization of teachers and other educators, public schools have lost some of the connection they always had to public life and democracy. For Dewey, one of the greatest hopes for public education in a democratic society was to help create equal opportunity for all youngsters, not just a privileged few. A century ago, he wrote, "It is the aim of progressive education to take part in correcting unfair privilege and unfair deprivation, not to perpetuate them" (Dewey, 1916, pp. 119–120). Decades later, in response to Dewey's hopeful vision of public schools as a democratizing institution, economists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis wrote an article with the ironic title, "If Dewey Calls, Tell Him Things Didn't Work Out" (1974). Despite Dewey's fervent wish that equality of opportunity might be the outcome of public schooling, it has not occurred.

Some of the changes in public education in the past century, however, have been quite positive and the field of multicultural education has changed as a result. For instance, population changes have brought new energy to public schools. The United States continues

to be a nation of immigrants. Yet, many US educators do not necessarily view new immigrants in a positive light because they have not been adequately prepared to teach these newcomers, having neither the academic preparation nor the resources with which to teach them. One result is that many educators are unaware of the tremendous assets these students bring to their education, including bilingualism and multilingualism, as well as numerous life skills and strengths such as resilience, courage, and grit.

Other changes in the sociopolitical context of our society have also had an impact on multicultural education. Since its beginnings, multicultural education has consistently expanded its reach to include other differences besides race and ethnicity. These parallel movements to multicultural education in the past quarter century or so have helped broaden the field to be more inclusive of oppressive conditions, attitudes, and behaviors not originally included under the umbrella of multicultural education. These include gender, social class, language, religion, and ability. Most have been quite readily accepted by proponents of multicultural education. Unfortunately, gender studies, which incorporates women, gay, lesbian, transgender, transsexual, and other groups, has not been as widely accepted within the field of multicultural education. Formerly invisible in the curriculum, gender studies took hold most strongly in higher education (Schmitz, Butler, Guy-Sheftall, & Rosefelt, 2004). Queer studies, a vibrant field in its own right, has also become a prominent feature in higher education (Spargo, 1999). The same is not the case in K-12 education where it has faced opposition and contestation.

Thus, acceptance of a broader definition of multicultural education has not been universal. The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) has taken a principled stand on this issue by including the following anti-discrimination statement on its website:

> The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and services. NAME is consciously and proactively inclusive of all areas of diversity including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sovereign tribal Nations status, ancestry, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, socioeconomic status, marital status, language, disability, or immigration status. (NAME, n.d.)

In spite of this noble statement, individuals both within and outside the organization still have doubts about including some differences under the umbrella of multicultural education, especially sexuality. Some fear that what they consider "diluting" multicultural education to include other differences will diminish its original focus on race and ethnicity. More recently, others have protested the inclusion of gender and queer studies in the curriculum on religious grounds. It is important to remember, however, that during the Civil Rights Movement, racists voiced similar religious objections concerning equality for African Americans. Clearly, much still needs to be done to counter negative attitudes, behaviors, policies, and practices targeting LGBTQ communities, which often lead to alienation, exclusion, and high rates of suicide among these populations.

Imagining new possibilities for a new era

Where will multicultural education be in another half century? Will it have gone the way of other movements in education that have flourished and then disappeared? Will there still be a need for multicultural education in 50 years? Will it become more inclusive or less so?

How will continuing globalization, immigration, privatization, and other issues not yet on the scene affect it?

Reconceptualizing multicultural education

In the remainder of this article, I want to imagine what a new, reconceptualized multicultural education might look like. This is a topic I addressed with my colleagues Patty Bode, Eugenie Kang, and John Raible a number of years ago (Nieto, Bode, Kang, & Raible, 2008). In that chapter, we discussed what it might mean to retheorize multicultural education to take into account critical issues generally missing in the discourse. One salient issue we addressed was that of *power*. In most of the original conceptions of multicultural education, power was not explicitly addressed, though there was an implicit recognition on the part of many theorists concerning how power relations are part and parcel of the problem of inequality. By the 1990s, the issue of power was becoming more visible in key writings in the field. For example, James Banks characterized multicultural education as a "transformative project" (1996), while both Christine Sleeter (1995a) and Stephen May (1999) wrote about "critical multicultural education," Peter McLaren and Henry Giroux discussed "revolutionary multiculturalism" (1997) and as early as the first edition of my book, *Affirming Diversity* (1992), I insisted that education could not be separated from the sociopolitical context in which schools exist.

Some theorists and many practitioners however, in their enthusiasm to implement multicultural education, have focused on superficial aspects of diversity rather than on the institutional policies and practices that maintain entrenched power relations in place. Consequently, a critical stance has sometimes been missing in the curriculum, that is, in *what* is taught in multicultural education. Michael Apple has articulated what a concern for power might mean not just in multicultural education but also in curriculum in general. He writes,

> ... a truly critical study of education needs to deal with more than the technical issues of how we teach efficiently and effectively – too often the dominant or only questions educators ask. It must think critically about education's relationship to economic, political, and cultural power. (Apple, 2004, p. vii)

Some of the questions Apple asked readers to consider were: "Whose knowledge is it? Who selected it? Why is it organized and taught in this way? To this particular group?" (Apple, 2004, p. 6). And, of course, Paulo Freire's quintessential questions: Who benefits? Who loses? (see Freire, 1970) continue to be relevant for multicultural education today.

A related significant issue for reimagining multicultural education concerns pedagogy, that is, *how* the curriculum is taught and the learning environment is structured. Since the 1990s, there has been an increased focus on critical pedagogy and critical literacy, both of which encourage educators to teach in a way that communicates the importance of reflecting critically on knowledge and how to use it (see some early iterations of this approach in Nieto (1992) and Peterson (1991)). For example, Bob Peterson went beyond Freire's proposition that students need to learn to "read the word" in order to "read the world" by suggesting that students needed to learn "to "read the world and change it" (1991). These ideas have had a profound impact on multicultural education, if not so much in practice, at least in theory.

Reimagining multicultural education also means rethinking the goals and visions it exemplifies even though these may contradict current notions of education. Some educators have suggested, for instance, that *love* and *caring*, terms not usually associated with education – particularly in these times of standardization, accountability, and marketization – are also essential in education The contributions of Nel Noddings (1992) and Angela Valenzuela (1999) have been particularly significant. Rosalie Rolón-Dow has carried this notion further by adding that care alone is not enough; *critical care* is what is needed, especially when considering the historical and lived realities of students of color, Latin@s in the case she describes (2005).

The issue of *happiness* should also be part and parcel of what multicultural education is about. Daisaku Ikeda has written extensively about this in describing Soka education, a Buddhist view of teaching, learning, and education (2001). In reviewing a book of his essays, I wrote,

> Imagine a world in which the goal of education is the realization of happiness; in which learning is celebrated as the very purpose of human life; in which humanitarian competition is valued over self-promotion; in which the vision of education is both democratic and participatory; in which words such as *compassionate, humanistic, holistic, wise,* and *courageous* are used liberally to describe the outcomes of education; in which literature and the arts are favored over functionalism and materialism; in which the ultimate goal of education is "to help [the student] to become the best he is capable of becoming, to become actually what he deeply is potentially" (p. 46) (Nieto, 2012, p. 152)

Ikeda suggests, for example, that students' identities, perspectives, and experiences need to be included in the school's curriculum and pedagogy. He describes an education that is deeply humanistic, democratic, participatory, and artistic. It is about learning for life, not for a job. It echoes the very best of Freire, Dewey, and other humanists who view education as life itself. This is what Soka education is about, and it seems to me that our field of multicultural education can learn a great deal from it.

New visions, new outcomes

I want to conclude by reflecting on a question that a reporter asked me recently. "What would a student who had experienced the kind of education you envision – an education that is multicultural, socially just, critical, and culturally responsive, from kindergarten through high school – look like upon graduation?" she asked. That is, of course, the fundamental question all educators must think about in their daily practice because outcomes should be our greatest concern. I am not talking here about outcomes on exams, or the jobs they get when they complete their studies, or other such functionalist issues. Being "college or career ready," to use the current jargon, can be important but also a slippery concept. Careers available today were unheard of even a couple of decades ago and aside from excellent literacy and numeracy skills, being "college or career ready" changes all the time. Instead, what I'm talking about, and what this reporter was asking, concerns the kinds of attitudes, perspectives, and values that young people should develop as a result of their education.

It was such a weighty question that I had to think about it for a moment before responding. My answer to her was this: I would hope that such a young person would be a curious and enthusiastic learner, open to new and different perspectives, knowledgeable of the arts, literature, history, and the social and behavioral sciences, adept at communicating important

ideas, able to hold intelligent conversations about a variety of topics, accepting and respectful of differences, and be at least bilingual, if not multilingual. I would hope she would be happy, that she would have felt she belonged as a significant member of her school community, and that her teachers cared about, and for, her. And, finally, I would hope that he would feel empowered to help leave the world better than he found it. This is, after all, what education should be about.

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