An Introduction to Multicultural Education

FIFTH EDITION

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(2014)

Pearson Publishers

CHAPTER 3

Dimensions and School Characteristics

One problem that continues to haunt the multicultural education movement—from both within and without—is the tendency by the public, teachers, administrators, and policy makers to oversimplify the concept. Multicultural education is complex and multidimensional, yet media commentators and educators alike often focus on only one of its many dimensions. Some teachers view it only as the inclusion of content about ethnic groups into the curriculum; others view it as prejudice reduction; still others view it as the celebration of ethnic holidays and events. Some educators view it as a movement to close the achievement gap between White mainstream students and low-income students of color. After a presentation in a school in which I described the major goals of multicultural education, a math teacher told me that what I said was fine and appropriate for language arts and social studies teachers but it had nothing to do with mathematics teachers like him. After all, he said, math was math, regardless of the color of the students.

The Dimensions of Multicultural Education

This statement by a respected teacher at a prestigious independent school, and his reaction to multicultural education, caused me to think deeply about the images of multicultural education that had been created by the key theorists in the field. I wondered whether we were partly responsible for this teacher's narrow conception of multicultural education as merely content integration. It was in response to these

kinds of statements by classroom teachers that I conceptualized the dimensions of multicultural education. I use the dimensions in this chapter to describe the field's major components and to highlight important developments within the last two decades (Banks, 2004c). The dimensions of multicultural education are (1) content integration, (2) the knowledge construction process, (3) prejudice reduction, (4) an equity pedagogy, and (5) an empowering school culture and social structure. (See Figure 3.1.)

Content Integration

Content integration deals with the extent to which teachers use examples, data, and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate the key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline. In many school districts as well as in popular writings, multicultural education is viewed only (or primarily) as content integration. This narrow conception of multicultural education is a major reason that many teachers in subjects such as biology, physics, and mathematics believe that multicultural education is irrelevant to them and their students.

In fact, this dimension of multicultural education probably does have more relevance to social studies and language arts teachers than it does to physics and math teachers. Physics and math teachers can insert multicultural content into their subjects, for example, by using biographies of physicists and mathematicians of color and examples from different cultural groups. However, these kinds of activities are probably not the most important multicultural tasks that can be undertaken by science and math teachers. Activities related to the other dimensions of multicultural education—such as the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, and an equity pedagogy—are probably the most fruitful areas for the multicultural involvement of science and math teachers (Lee & Buxton, 2010; Nasir & Cobb, 2007).

The Knowledge Construction Process

The knowledge construction process describes the procedures by which social, behavioral, and natural scientists create knowledge and how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways that knowledge is constructed within it. The knowledge construction process is an important part of multicultural teaching. Teachers help students to understand how

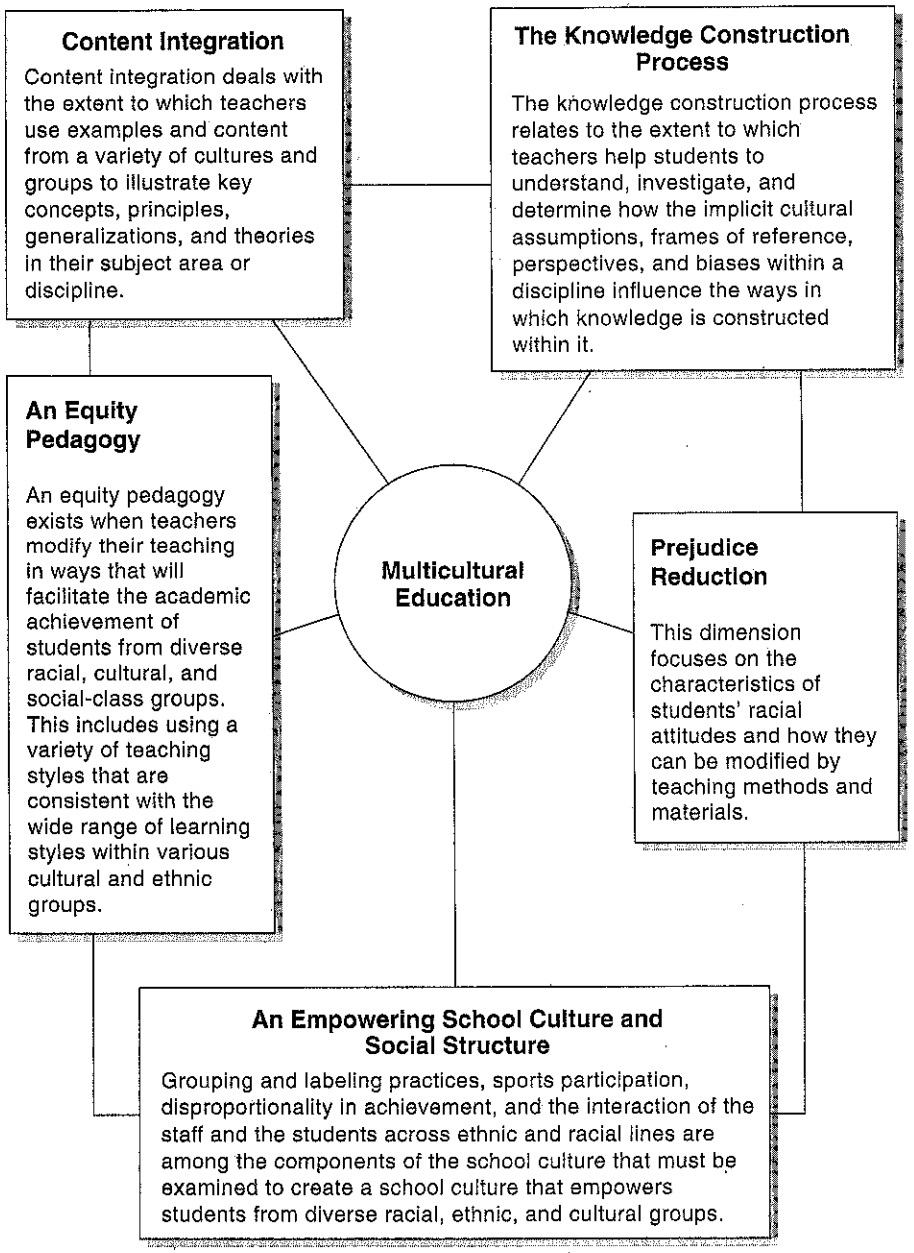

FIGURE 3.1 The Dimensions of Multicultural Education

Source: J. A. Banks (2006). *Cultural Diversity and Education: Foundations, Curriculum, and Teaching* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson, p. 5. Reprinted with permission.

knowledge is created and how it is influenced by the racial, ethnic, gender, and social-class positions of individuals and groups.

Important landmark work related to the construction of knowledge has been done by feminist social scientists and epistemologists as well as by scholars in ethnic studies. Working in philosophy and sociology, Sandra Harding (1998, 2012), Lorraine Code (1991), and Patricia Hill Collins (2000) have done some of the most important work in knowledge construction. This seminal work in knowledge construction being done by scholars such as Harding, Code, and Collins, although influential among scholars and curriculum developers, has been overshadowed in the popular media by the polarized canon debates. These writers and researchers have seriously challenged the claims made by the positivists that knowledge is value free and have described the ways in which knowledge claims are influenced by the gender and ethnic characteristics of the knower. These scholars argue that the human interests and value assumptions of those who create knowledge should be identified, discussed, and examined.

Code (1991) states that the gender of the knower is epistemologically significant because knowledge is both *subjective* and *objective*, and that both aspects should be recognized and discussed. Collins (2000), an African American sociologist, extends and enriches the works of writers such as Code (1991) and Harding (1991, 2012) by describing the ways in which race and gender interact to influence knowledge construction. Collins calls the perspective of African American women "the outsider-within perspective." She writes,

> As outsiders within, Black women have a distinct view of the contradictions between the dominant group's actions and ideologies. (p. 11)

Curriculum theorists, scholars in multicultural education, and historians are conceptualizing and developing ways to apply the work being done by feminist and ethnic studies epistemologists to the classroom. My book *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies* (Banks, 2009b) contains conceptual and transformative lessons for teaching about the various ethnic groups, including African Americans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, and European Americans. Rethinking Schools, Ltd., a nonprofit educational publisher in Milwaukee founded by teachers, publishes a number of publications that help teachers conceptualize and teach transformative lessons about diversity, including *Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice*, Volume 1 (Au, Bigelow, & Karp, 2007), and *Rethinking Globalization: Teaching for Justice in an Unjust World* (Bigelow & Peterson, 2002). Loewen has written four books that contain transformative perspectives about race in the United States that are highly accessible and useful for teachers: *Lies My Teachers Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (Loewen, 1995); *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (Loewen, 1999); *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (Loewen, 2005); and *Teaching What Really Happened: How to Avoid the Tyranny of Textbooks and Get Students Excited About Doing History* (Loewen, 2010).

Prejudice Reduction

The prejudice reduction dimension of multicultural education describes the characteristics of children's racial attitudes and strategies that can be used to help students to develop more positive racial and ethnic attitudes (Aboud, 2009; Stephan & Mealy, 2012; Stephan & Vogt, 2004). Since the 1960s, social scientists have learned a great deal about how racial attitudes in children develop and about ways in which educators can design interventions to help children to acquire more positive feelings toward other racial groups. Stephan and Vogt (2004), Stephan and Mealy (2012), and Stephan and Stephan (2004) provide extensive discussions about the research on children's racial attitudes and strategies that can be used to help students attain democratic racial attitudes and behaviors.

The research on children's racial attitudes tells us that by the age of 4, African American, White, and Mexican American children are aware of racial differences and often make racial preferences that are biased toward Whites. Students can be helped to develop more positive racial attitudes if realistic images of ethnic and racial groups are included in teaching materials in a consistent, natural, and integrated fashion. Involving students in vicarious experiences and in cooperative learning activities with students of other racial groups will also help them to develop more positive racial attitudes and behaviors. Researchers such as Cross (1991) and Wright (1998) question the research showing that African American children have negative attitudes toward themselves and other African Americans. The second part of Chapter 8 in this book discusses the research on children's racial attitudes, strategies that can be used to help students develop positive racial attitudes, and guidelines for reducing prejudice in students.

Equity Pedagogy

An equity pedagogy exists when teachers use techniques and teaching methods that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups. Teaching techniques responsive to the learning and cultural characteristics of diverse groups (Au, 2011; Boykin, 2012; Gay, 2010; Moll & Spear-Ellinwood, 2012) and cooperative learning techniques (Horn, 2012; Lotan, 2012) are some of the interventions that teachers have found effective with students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and language groups.

If teachers are to increase learning opportunities for all students, they must be knowledgeable about the social and cultural contexts of teaching and learning (Au, 2011; Lee, 2007). Although students are not solely products of their cultures and vary in the degree to which they identify with them, there are some distinctive cultural behaviors associated with ethnic groups (Au, 2011; Boykin, 2012). Effective teachers are aware of the distinctive backgrounds of their students and have the skills to translate that knowledge into effective instruction (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Research indicates that teachers can increase the classroom participation and academic achievement of students from different racial, cultural, and language groups by modifying their instruction so that it draws upon their cultural strengths. Some studies provide evidence to support the idea that when teachers use culturally responsive teaching, the academic achievement of students from diverse groups increases. Au and Kawakami (1985) found that when teachers used participation structures in lessons that were similar to the Hawaiian speech event "talk story," the reading achievement of Native Hawaiian students increased significantly. They write,

> The chief characteristic of talk story is *joint performance*, or the cooperative production of responses of two or more speakers. For example, if the subject is going surfing, one of the boys begins by recounting the events of a particular day. But he will immediately invite one of the other boys to join him in describing the events to the group. The two boys will alternate as speakers, each telling a part of the story, with other children present occasionally chiming in. (Au & Kawakami, 1985, p. 409; emphasis in original)

Talk story is very different from recitations in most classrooms, in which the teacher usually calls on an individual child to tell a story.

Lee (2007) found that the achievement of African American students increases when they are taught literary interpretations with lessons that use the African American verbal practice of *signifying*. Signifying is a practice of speech within African American English (or Ebonics) in which speakers tease and affront each other.

An Empowering School Culture and Social Structure

An empowering school culture and social structure describes the process of restructuring the culture and organization of the school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, language, and social-class groups will experience educational equality and empowerment. This dimension of multicultural education involves conceptualizing the school as a unit of change and making structural changes within the school environment so that students from all groups will have an equal opportunity for success. Establishing assessment techniques that are fair to all groups (Kornhaber, 2012; Shepard, 2012; Taylor & Nolen, 2012), detracking the school (Watanabe, 2012), and creating the norm among the school staff that all students can learn—regardless of their racial, ethnic, or social-class groups—are important goals for schools that wish to create a school culture and social structure that are empowering and enhancing for students from diverse groups.

Characteristics of a Multicultural School

To implement the dimensions of multicultural education, schools and other educational institutions must be reformed so that students from all social-class, racial, cultural, gender, and language groups will have an equal opportunity to learn and experience cultural empowerment (Banks & Banks, 2013). Educational institutions should also help all students to develop democratic values, beliefs, and actions and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function cross-culturally.

What parts of the school need to be reformed in order to implement the dimensions of multicultural education? A reformed school that exemplifies the dimensions has the eight characteristics listed in Table 3.1. Consequently, school reform should be targeted on the following school variables:

1. Attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and actions of the school staff. Research indicates that teachers and administrators often have low expectations for language minority students, low-income students, and students of color (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Gay, 2010; Green, 2012). In a restructured multicultural school, teachers and administrators have high academic expectations for all students and believe that all students can learn (Au, 2011; Howard, 2010; Nieto, 2010; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012; Sizemore, 2008).

2. Formalized curriculum and course of study. The curriculum in most schools describes numerous concepts, events, and situations from the perspectives of mainstream Americans (Au, 2012a; Banks, 2009b). It often marginalizes the experiences of people of color, women, and LGBT students (Kavanagh, 2012). Multicultural education reforms the curriculum so that students view events, concepts, issues, and problems from the perspectives of diverse racial, ethnic, language, gender, and social-class

TABLE 3.1 The Eight Characteristics of the Multicultural School

1. The teachers and school administrators have high expectations for all students and positive attitudes toward them. They also respond to them in positive and caring ways.
2. The formalized curriculum reflects the experiences, cultures, and perspectives of a range of cultural and ethnic groups as well as of both genders.
3. The teaching styles used by the teachers match the learning, cultural, and motivational characteristics of the students.
4. The teachers and administrators show respect for the students' first languages and dialects.
5. The instructional materials used in the school show events, situations, and concepts from the perspectives of a range of cultural, ethnic, and racial groups.
6. The assessment and testing procedures used in the school are culturally sensitive and result in students of color being represented proportionately in classes for the gifted and talented.
7. The school culture and the hidden curriculum reflect cultural and ethnic diversity.
8. The school counselors have high expectations for students from different racial, ethnic, and language groups and help these students to set and realize positive career goals.

groups (Au, 2012a; Banks, 2009b). The perspectives of both men and women—as well as those of LGBT people (Mayo, 2013) are also important in the restructured, multicultural curriculum.

3. **Learning, teaching, and cultural characteristics favored by the school.** Research indicates that a large number of low-income, linguistic minority, Latino, Native American, and African American students have learning, cultural, and motivational characteristics that differ from the teaching styles that are used most frequently in the schools (Au, 2011; Lee, 2007). These students often learn best when cooperative rather than competitive teaching techniques are used (Horn, 2012; Lotan, 2012). Many of them also learn best when school rules and learning outcomes are made explicit and expectations are made clear (Delpit, 2012; Heath, 2012).

4. **Languages and dialects of the school.** Many students come to school speaking languages and dialects of English that differ from the Standard English being taught. Although all students must learn Standard English in order to function successfully in the wider society, the school should respect the first languages and varieties of English that students speak (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Valdés, Capitelli, & Alvarez, 2011). Many African American students come to school speaking what many linguists call Ebonics, or "Black English" (Alim & Baugh, 2007; Hudley & Mallinson, 2011). In the restructured, multicultural school, teachers and administrators respect the languages and dialects of English that students come to school speaking and use the students' first languages and dialects as vehicles for helping them to learn Standard English (Varghese & Stritikus, 2013).

5. **Instructional materials.** Many biases—sometimes latent—are found in textbooks and other instructional materials. These materials often marginalize the experiences of people of color, language minorities, women, and low-income people and focus on the perspectives of men who are members of the mainstream society (C. A. M. Banks, in press). In the restructured, multicultural school, instructional materials are reformed and depict events from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives (Au, 2012a; Banks, 2009a,b). Teachers and students are also taught to identify and challenge the biases and assumptions of all materials.

6. **Assessment and testing procedures.** IQ and other mental ability tests often result in students of color, low-income students, and language minority students being overrepresented in classes for students with mental retardation and underrepresented in classes for students who are gifted and talented (Ford, 2013). Human talent, as well as mental retardation, is randomly distributed across human population groups. Consequently, in a restructured multicultural school, assessment techniques are used that enable students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and language groups to be assessed in culturally fair and just ways (Taylor & Nolen, 2012; Shepard, 2012). In a restructured multicultural school, students of color and language minority students are found proportionately in classes for the gifted and talented (Ford, 2013). They are not heavily concentrated in classes for mentally retarded students (Huber, Artiles, & Hernandez-Caca, 2012; Richman, 2012).

7. **The school culture and the hidden curriculum.** The hidden curriculum has been defined as the curriculum that no teacher explicitly teaches but that all students learn. Jackson (1992) calls the hidden curriculum "untaught lessons." The school's attitudes toward cultural and ethnic diversity are reflected in many subtle ways in the school culture, such as the kinds of pictures on the bulletin boards, the racial composition of the school staff, and the fairness with which students from different racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups are disciplined and suspended. Multicultural education reforms the total school environment so that the hidden curriculum sends the message that ethnic, cultural, and language diversity is valued and celebrated.

8. The counseling program. In an effective multicultural school, counselors help students from diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, and language groups to make effective career choices and to take the courses needed to pursue those career choices (Kim & Sue, 2012). Culturally responsive counselors also help students to reach beyond their grasp, to dream, and to actualize their dreams.

Multicultural educators make the assumption that if the preceding eight variables within the school environment are reformed and restructured and the dimensions of multicultural education are implemented, students from diverse groups will attain higher levels of academic achievement and the intergroup attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of students from all groups will become more democratic.

CHAPTER 4

Curriculum Transformation

It is important to distinguish between curriculum *infusion* and curriculum *transformation*. When the curriculum is infused with ethnic and gender content without curriculum transformation, the students view the experiences of cultural groups and of women from the perspectives and conceptual frameworks of the traditional Western canon (Au, 2012a; Nussbaum, 2012). Consequently, groups such as Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos are added to the curriculum, but their experiences are viewed from the perspective of mainstream historians and social scientists. When curriculum infusion occurs without transformation, women are added to the curriculum but are viewed from the perspectives of mainstream males. Concepts such as "The Westward Movement," "The European Discovery of America," and "Men and Their Families Went West" remain intact.

When curriculum transformation occurs, students and teachers make *paradigm shifts* and view the American and world experience from the perspectives of different racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender groups. Columbus's arrival in the Americas is no longer viewed as a "discovery" but as a cultural contact or encounter that had very different consequences for the Tainos (Arawaks), Europeans, and Africans (Bigelow & Peterson, 2003). In a transformed curriculum, the experiences of women in the West are not viewed as an appendage to the experience of men but "through women's eyes" (Armitage, 1987; Limerick, 1987).

This chapter discusses the confusion over goals in multicultural education, describes its goals and challenges, and states the rationale for a transformative multicultural curriculum. Important goals of multicultural education are to help teachers and students transform their thinking about the nature and development of the United States and the world and to develop a commitment to act in ways that will make the United States and the world more democratic and just.

The Meaning and Goals of Multicultural Education

A great deal of confusion exists—among both educators and the public—about the meaning of multicultural education. The meaning of multicultural education among these groups varies from education about people in other lands to educating African American students about their heritage but teaching them little about the Western heritage of the United States. The confusion over the meaning of multicultural education is exemplified by a question the editor of a national education publication asked me: "What is the difference between multicultural education, ethnocentric education, and global education?" Later during a telephone interview, I realized that she had meant "Afrocentric education" rather than "ethnocentric education." To her, these terms were synonymous.

Before we can solve the problem caused by the multiple meanings of multicultural education, we need to better understand the causes of the problem. One important cause of the confusion over the meaning of multicultural education is the multiple meanings of the concept in the professional literature itself. Sleeter and Grant (1997), in their comprehensive survey of the literature on multicultural education, found that the term has diverse meanings and that the only commonality the various definitions share is reform designed to improve schooling for students of color.

To advance the field and to reduce the multiple meanings of multicultural education, scholars need to develop a higher level of consensus about what the concept means. Agreement about the meaning of multicultural education is emerging among academics. A consensus is developing among scholars that an important goal of multicultural education is to increase educational equality for students from diverse ethnic, cultural, (Banks, 2013; Nieto, 2012), social-class (Weis & Dolby, 2012; Weis, 2013), and language groups (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010); for female and male students; for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students (Mayo, 2013); and for exceptional students (Friend, 2012). A major assumption of multicultural education is that some groups of students—because their cultural characteristics are more consistent with the culture, norms, and expectations of the school than are those of other groups of students—have greater opportunities for academic success than do students whose cultures are less consistent with the school culture. Low-income African American males, for example, tend to have more problems in schools than do middle-class White males (T. C. Howard, 2012).

Because one of its goals is to increase educational equality for students from diverse groups, school restructuring is essential to make multicultural education become a reality. To restructure schools in order to provide all students with an equal chance to learn, some of the major

assumptions, beliefs, and structures within schools must be radically changed. These include tracking and the ways in which mental ability tests are interpreted and used (Shepard, 2012; Taylor & Nolen, 2012; Watanabe, 2012). New paradigms about the ways students learn, about human ability (Shearer, 2012), and about the nature of knowledge will have to be institutionalized in order to restructure schools and make multicultural education a reality. Teachers will have to believe that all students can learn, regardless of their social class or ethnic group membership, and that knowledge is a social construction that has social, political, and normative assumptions (Bailey & Cuomo, 2008; Harding, 1998; Hartsock, 1998). Implementing multicultural education within a school is a continuous process that cannot be implemented within a few weeks or over several years. The implementation of multicultural education requires a long-term commitment to school improvement and restructuring.

Another important goal of multicultural education—on which there is wide consensus among authorities in the field but that is neither understood nor appreciated by many teachers, journalists, and the public—is to help all students, including White mainstream students, to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will need to survive and function effectively in a future U.S. society in which about half the population will be people of color by 2042 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Our survival as a strong and democratic nation will be seriously imperiled if we do not help our students attain the knowledge and skills they need to function in a culturally diverse future society and world. As Martin Luther King, Jr. stated eloquently, "We will live together as brothers and sisters or die separate and apart as strangers" (King, 1987).

This goal of multicultural education is related to an important goal of global education—to help students to develop cross-cultural competency in cultures beyond our national boundaries and the insights and understandings needed to understand how all peoples living on the earth have highly interconnected fates (Banks et al., 2005). Citizens who have an understanding of and empathy for the cultures within their own nation are probably more likely to function effectively in cultures outside of their nation than are citizens who have little understanding of and empathy for cultures within their own society.

Although multicultural and global education share some important aims, in practice global education can hinder teaching about ethnic and cultural diversity in the United States. Some teachers are more comfortable teaching about Mexico than they are teaching about Mexican Americans who live within their own cities and states. Other teachers, as well as some publishers, do not distinguish between *multicultural education* and *global education*. Although the goals of multicultural and global education are complementary, they need to be distinguished both conceptually and in practice.

Multicultural Education Is for All Students

We need to think seriously about why multicultural educators have not been more successful in conveying to teachers, journalists, and the public the idea that multicultural education is concerned not only with students of color and linguistically diverse students but also with White mainstream students. It is also not widely acknowledged that many of the reforms designed to increase the academic achievement of ethnic and linguistic minority students—such as a pedagogy that is sensitive to student learning characteristics and cooperative learning techniques—will also help White mainstream students to increase their academic achievement and to develop more positive intergroup attitudes and values (Gay, 2012; Horn, 2012; Lotan, 2012).

It is important for multicultural education to be conceptualized as a strategy for all students for several important reasons. U.S. schools are not working as well as they should be to prepare all students to function in a highly technological, postindustrial society (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Most students of color (with the important exception of some groups of Asian students such as Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans) and low-income students are more dependent on the school for academic achievement than are White middle-class students for a variety of complex reasons. However, school restructuring is needed for all students because of the high level of literacy and skills needed by citizens in a knowledge society and because of the high expectations that the public has for today's schools. Public expectations for the public schools have increased tremendously since the turn of the century, when many school leavers were able to get jobs in factories (Graham, 2005). School restructuring is an important and major aim of multicultural education.

Multicultural education should also be conceptualized as a strategy for all students because it will become institutionalized and supported in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities only to the extent that it is perceived as universal and in the broad public interest. An ethnic-specific notion of multicultural education stands little chance of success and implementation in the nation's educational institutions.

Challenges to the Mainstream Curriculum

Some readers might rightly claim that an ethnic-specific curriculum and education already exists in U.S. educational institutions and that it is Eurocentric and male dominated. I would agree to some extent with this claim. However, I believe that the days for the primacy and dominance of the mainstream curriculum are limited. The curriculum that is institutionalized within U.S. schools, colleges, and universities is being seriously challenged today and will continue to be challenged until it is reformed and more accurately reflects the experiences, voices, and struggles of people of color, of women, of LGBT people, and of other cultural, language, and social-class groups in U.S. society. The curriculum within U.S. schools, colleges, and universities has changed substantially within the last three decades. It is important that these changes be recognized and acknowledged. Students in today's educational institutions are learning much more content about ethnic, cultural, racial, and gender diversity than they learned three decades ago. The ethnic studies and women's studies movements have had a significant influence on the curriculum in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities.

The dominance of the mainstream curriculum is much less complete and tenacious than it was before the civil rights and women's rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The historical, social, and economic factors are different today than they were when Anglo Americans established control over the major social, economic, and political institutions in the United States in the 17th and 18th centuries. The economic, demographic, and ideological factors that led to the establishment of Anglo hegemony early in U.S. history are changing, even though Anglo Americans are still politically, economically, and culturally dominant. Anglo dominance was indicated by the U.S. Supreme Court decisions that slowed the pace of affirmative action during the 1980s and that chipped away at civil rights laws protecting people with disabilities in 2001. The court also ruled against diversity interests when it declared the school desegregation plans in Seattle, Washington, and in Louisville, Kentucky, unconstitutional in 2007.

Nevertheless, there are signs throughout U.S. society that Anglo dominance and hegemony are being challenged and that groups such as African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos are increasingly demanding full structural inclusion and a reformulation of the canon used to select content for the school, college, and university curriculum (Chang, 2012; Hu-DeHart, 2012). It is also important to realize that many compassionate and informed Whites are joining people of color to support reforms in U.S. social, economic, political, and educational institutions. It would be a mistake to conceptualize or perceive the reform movements today as people of color versus Whites.

One pervasive myth within our society is that Whites are a monolithic group. The word *White* conceals more than it reveals. Whites are a very diverse group in terms of ethnic and cultural characteristics, political affiliations, and attitudes toward ethnic and cultural diversity

(G. Howard, 2012; McIntosh, 2012). Many Whites today, as well as historically, have supported social movements to increase the rights of African Americans and other people of color. Reform-oriented White citizens who are pushing for a more equitable and just society are an important factor that will make it increasingly difficult for the Anglo mainstream vision to continue to dominate U.S. political and educational institutions.

Whites today are playing an important role in social reform movements and in the election of African American and Latino politicians. Barack Obama was elected president of the United States in 2008 with significant support from White voters. African Americans who have been elected as mayors, as governors, and to Congress have also received wide White support, as was the case in the election of Deval Patrick, who was elected governor of Massachusetts and assumed office in January 2007. Many White students on university campuses are forming coalitions with students of color to demand that the university curriculum be reformed to include content about people of color and women. Students who are demanding ethnic studies requirements on university campuses have experienced major victories (Chang, 2012; Hu-DeHart, 2012).

The Anglocentric curriculum will continue to be challenged until it is reformed to include the voices and experiences of a range of ethnic, cultural, and language groups. Lesbian and gay groups are also demanding that content about them be integrated into the school, college, and university curriculum (Mayo, 2013; Kavanagh, 2012). Colleges and universities are responding to the concerns of these groups much more effectively than are the schools (Chang, 2012; Hu-DeHart, 2012).

The significant percentage of people of color—including African Americans and Latinos who are in positions of leadership in educational institutions—will continue to work to integrate the experiences of their people into the school and university curricula. These individuals include researchers, professors, administrators, and authors of textbooks. Students of color will continue to form coalitions with progressive White students and demand that the school and university curriculum be reformed to reflect the ethnic, cultural, and language reality of U.S. society. Students of color were 46 percent of the public school population in the United States in 2010 (NCES, 2012). Parents and community groups will continue to demand that the school and university curricula be reformed to give voice to their experiences and struggles. African American parents and community groups will continue to push for a curriculum that reflects African civilizations and experimental schools for Black males (T. C. Howard, 2012).

Feminists will continue to challenge the mainstream curriculum because many of them view it as malecentric, patriarchal, and sexist (Bailey & Cuomo, 2008). Much of the new research in women's studies deals with the cultures of women of color (Guy-Sheftall, 2012). Women's studies and ethnic studies will continue to interconnect and challenge the dominant curriculum in the nation's schools, colleges, and universities. Gay and lesbian groups will continue to demand that their voices, experiences, hopes, and dreams be reflected in a transformed curriculum (Mayo, 2013; Schneider, 2012).

Challenges to Multicultural Education

I have argued that an ethnic-specific version of multicultural education is not likely to become institutionalized within U.S. schools, colleges, and universities and that the days of Anglo hegemony in the U.S. curriculum are limited. This is admittedly a long view of our society and future. Multicultural education is frequently challenged by conservative writers and groups, such as the attacks that occurred on the ethnic studies program in the Tucson, Arizona, school district in 2010 (Chavez, 2010; Conant, 2010). These attacks occurred even though research indicates that the ethnic studies program increased the academic achievement of Mexican American students in the Tucson school district (Sleeter, 2011). Challenges to multicultural education and education related to diversity are likely to continue and will take diverse forms, expressions, and shapes. They are part of the dynamics of a democratic society in which diverse voices are freely expressed and heard.

Part of the confused meanings of multicultural education results from the attempts by neoconservative scholars to portray multicultural education as a movement against Western civilization, as anti-White, and by implication, anti-American (Chavez, 2010). The popular press frequently calls the movement to infuse an African perspective into the curriculum "Afrocentric," and it has defined the term to mean an education that excludes Whites and Western civilization.

The term *Afrocentric* has different meanings to different people. Because of its diverse interpretations by various people and groups, neoconservative scholars have focused many of their criticisms of multicultural education on this concept. Asante (1998) defines *Afrocentricity* as "placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior" (p. 6). In other words, Afrocentricity is looking at African and African American behavior from an African or African American perspective. His definition suggests that Black English, or Ebonics, cannot be understood unless it is viewed from the perspective of those who speak it. Afrocentricity, when Asante's definition is used, can describe the addition of an African American perspective to the school and university curriculum. When understood in this way, it is consistent

ith a multicultural curriculum because a multicultural curriculum helps udents to view behavior, concepts, and issues from different ethnic and ıltural perspectives.

The Canon Battle: Special Interests versus the Public Interest

he push by people of color and women to get their voices and experinces institutionalized within the curriculum and the curriculum canon ansformed has evoked a strong reaction from some neoconservative cholars (Chavez, 1991, 2010; Huntington, 2004). Many of the arguents in the editorials and articles written by the opponents of multicularal education are smoke screens for a conservative political agenda esigned not to promote the common good of the nation but to reinorce the status quo and dominant group hegemony and to promote the nterests of a small elite. A clever tactic of the neoconservative scholars is o define their own interests as universal and in the public good and the nterests of women and people of color as special interests that are parcularistic (Glazer, 1997; Huntington, 2004). When a dominant elite escribes its interests as the same as the public interest, it marginalizes he experiences of structurally excluded groups, such as women and peole of color.

The term *special interest* implies an interest that is particularistic and nconsistent with the overarching goals and needs of the nation-state or ommonwealth. To be in the public good, interests must extend beyond he needs of a unique or particular group. An important issue is who ormulates the criteria for determining what is a special interest. It is the ominant group or groups in power that have already shaped the curiculum, institutions, and structures in their images and interests. he dominant group views its interests not as special but as identical ith the common good. A special interest, in the view of those who conol the curriculum and other institutions within society, is therefore any nterest that challenges the dominant group's power and ideologies and aradigms, particularly if the interest group demands that the canon, ssumptions, and values of the institutions and structures be transormed. History is replete with examples of dominant groups that defined heir interests as the public interest.

One way in which people in power marginalize and disempower hose who are structurally excluded from the mainstream is by calling heir visions, histories, goals, and struggles special interests. This type of narginalization denies the legitimacy and validity of groups that are xcluded from full participation in society and its institutions.

Only a curriculum that reflects the experiences of a wide range of groups in the United States and the world—and the interests of these groups—is in the national interest and is consistent with the public good (Banks, 2007). Any other kind of curriculum reflects a special interest and is inconsistent with the needs of a nation that must survive in a pluralistic and highly interdependent global world. Special interest history and literature, such as history and literature that emphasize the primacy of the West and the history of European American males, is detrimental to the public good because it will not help students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for survival in the 21st century.

The aim of the ethnic studies and women's studies movements is not to push for special interests, but to reform the curriculum so that it will be more truthful and more inclusive, reflecting the histories and experiences of the diverse groups and cultures that make up U.S. society. These are not special interest reform movements, because they contribute to the democratization of the school and university curriculum. They contribute to the public good instead of strengthening special interests.

We need to rethink concepts such as *special interests, the national interest,* and *the public good* and to identify which groups are using these terms and for what purposes. We also must evaluate the use of these terms in the context of a nation and world that are rapidly changing. Powerless and excluded groups accurately perceive efforts to label their visions and experiences as special interests as an attempt to marginalize them and make their voices silent and their faces invisible (Guy-Sheftall, 2012).

A Transformed Curriculum and Multiple Perspectives

Educators use several approaches, summarized in Figure 4.1, to integrate cultural content into the school and university curriculum (Banks, 2009b). These approaches include the *contributions approach,* in which content about ethnic and cultural groups is limited primarily to holidays and celebrations, such as Cinco de Mayo, Asian/Pacific Heritage Week, African American History Month, and Women's History Week. This approach is used often in the primary and elementary grades. Another frequently used approach to integrate cultural content into the curriculum is the *additive approach.* In this approach, cultural content, concepts, and themes are added to the curriculum without changing its basic structure, purposes, and characteristics. The additive approach is often accomplished by the addition of a book, a unit, or a course to the curriculum without changing its framework.

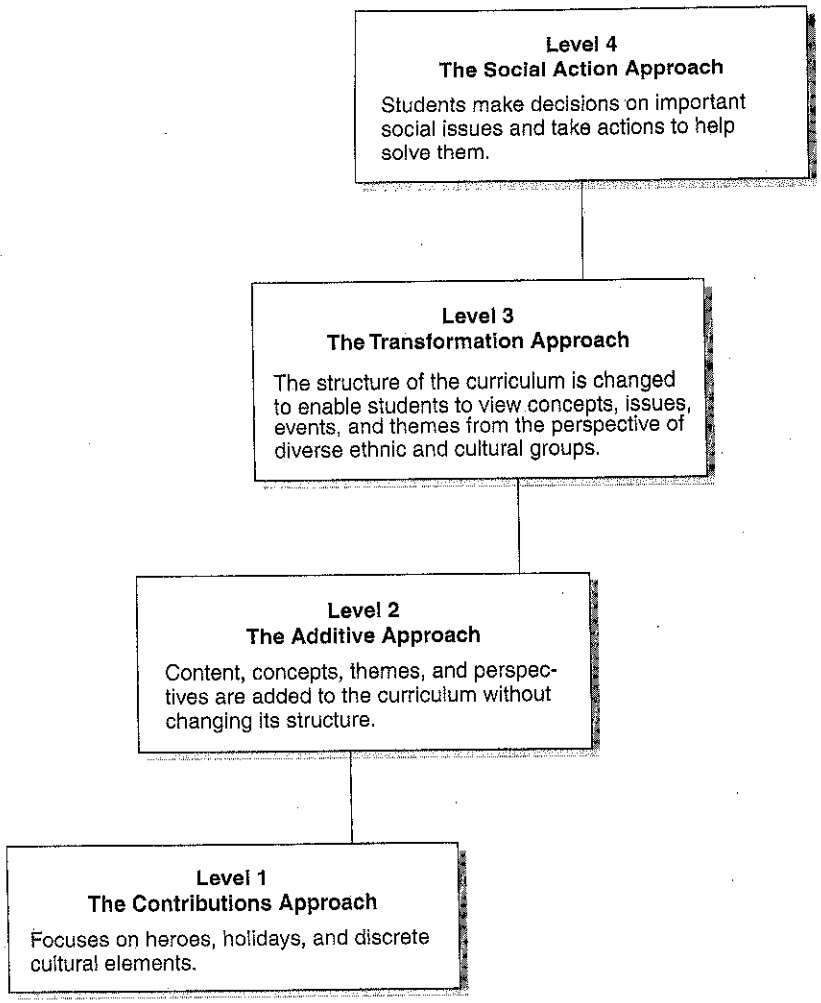

FIGURE 4.1 Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform

Neither the contributions nor the additive approach challenges the basic structure or canon of the curriculum. Cultural celebrations, activities, and content are inserted into the curriculum within the existing curriculum framework and assumptions. When these approaches are used to integrate cultural content into the curriculum, people, events, and interpretations related to ethnic groups and women often reflect the norms and values of the dominant culture rather than those of cultural communities. Individuals and groups challenging the status quo and dominant institutions are less likely to be selected for inclusion in the curriculum. Thus, Sacajawea, who helped Whites conquer Native American lands, is more likely to be chosen for inclusion than Geronimo, who resisted the takeover of Native American lands by Whites.

The *transformation approach* differs fundamentally from the contributions and additive approaches. It changes the canon, paradigms, and basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from different perspectives and points of view. Major goals of this approach include helping students to understand concepts, events, and people from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives and to understand knowledge as a social construction. In this approach, students are able to read and listen to the voices of the victors and the vanquished. They are also helped to analyze the teacher's perspective on events and situations and are given the opportunity to formulate and justify their own versions of events and situations. Important aims of the transformation approach are to teach students to think critically and to develop the skills to formulate, document, and justify their conclusions and generalizations.

When teaching a unit such as "The Westward Movement" using a transformation approach, the teacher assigns appropriate readings and then asks the students such questions as the following: What do you think the Westward movement means? Who was moving West—the Whites or the Native Americans? What region in the United States was referred to as the West? Why? The aim of these questions is to help students to understand that the Westward movement is a Eurocentric term. It refers to the movement of the European Americans who were headed in the direction of the Pacific Ocean. The Lakota Sioux were already living in the West and, as Limerick (2000) insightfully points out, were trying hard to stay put. They did not want to move. The Sioux did not consider their homeland "the West" but the center of the universe. The teacher could also ask the students to describe the Westward movement from the point of view of the Sioux. The students might use such words as "The End," "The Age of Doom," or "The Coming of the People Who Took Our Land." In addition, the teacher could also ask the students to give the unit a name that is more neutral than "The Westward Movement." They might name the unit "The Meeting of Two Cultures."

The *decision-making and social action approach* extends the *transformative curriculum* by enabling students to pursue projects and activities that allow them to make decisions and to take personal, social, and civic actions related to the concepts, problems, and issues they have studied. After they have studied the unit on different perspectives on the Westward movement, the students might decide that they want to learn more about Native Americans and to take actions that will enable the school to depict and perpetuate more accurate and positive views of America's first inhabitants. The students might compile a list of books written by

Native Americans for the school librarian to order and present a pageant for the school's morning exercise on "The Westward Movement: A View from the Other Side."

Teaching Students to Know, to Care, and to Act

The major goals of a transformative curriculum that fosters multicultural literacy should be to help students to *know*, to *care*, and to *act* in ways that will develop and foster a democratic and just society in which all groups experience cultural democracy and cultural empowerment. Figure 4.2 shows how knowing, caring, and acting intersect and are tightly interrelated.

Knowledge is an essential part of multicultural literacy, but it is not sufficient. Knowledge alone will not help students to develop an empathetic, caring commitment to humane and democratic change. An essential goal of a multicultural curriculum is to help students develop empathy and caring. To help the United States and world become more culturally democratic, students must also develop a commitment to personal, social, and civic action as well as the knowledge and skills needed to participate in effective civic action.

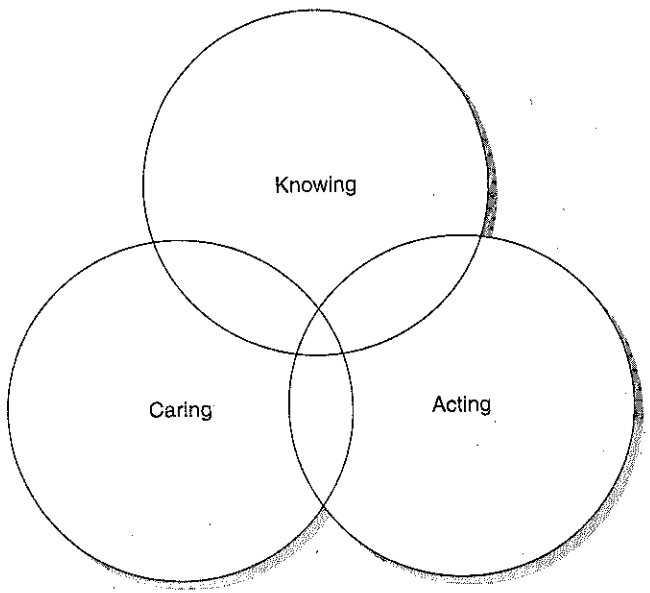

FIGURE 4.2 **The Intersection of Knowing, Caring, and Action**

Although knowledge, caring, and action are conceptually distinct, in the classroom they are highly interrelated. In my multicultural classes for teacher education students, I use historical and sociological knowledge about the experiences of different ethnic and racial groups to inform as well as to enable the students to examine and clarify their personal attitudes about ethnic diversity. These knowledge experiences are also a vehicle that enables the students to think of actions they can take to actualize their feelings and moral commitments. Knowledge experiences I have used to help students examine their value commitments and think of ways to act include the reading of *Balm in Gilead: Journey of a Healer*, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot's (1988) powerful biography of her mother, one of the nation's first African American child psychiatrists; the historical overviews of various U.S. ethnic groups in my book *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies* (Banks, 2009b); and several video and film presentations, including selected segments from *Eyes on the Prize II*, the award-winning history of the civil rights movement produced by Henry Hampton, and *Eye of the Beholder*, a powerful videotape that uses simulation to show the cogent effects of discrimination on adults. The videotape features Jane Elliott, who attained fame for her well-known experiment in which she discriminated against children on the basis of eye color to teach them about discrimination (Peters, 1987). During the summer of 2012, we showed the students *Precious Knowledge*, an informative DVD that describes the controversy over ethnic studies in the Tucson, Arizona, school district that occurred in 2010.

To enable the students to analyze and clarify their values regarding these readings and video experiences, I ask them questions such as these: How did the book, film, or videotape make you feel? Why do you think you feel that way? To enable them to think about ways to act on their feelings, I ask such questions as the following: How interracial are your own personal experiences? Would you like to live a more interracial life? What are some books that you can read or popular films that you can see that will enable you to act on your commitment to live a more racially and ethnically integrated life? The power of these kinds of experiences is often revealed in student papers.

The most meaningful and effective way to prepare teachers to involve students in multicultural experiences that will enable students to know, to care, and to participate in democratic action is to involve teachers in multicultural experiences that focus on these goals. When teachers have gained knowledge about cultural and ethnic diversity themselves, looked at that knowledge from different ethnic and cultural perspectives, and taken action to make their own lives and communities more culturally sensitive and diverse, they will have the knowledge and skills needed to help transform the curriculum canon as well the hearts and minds of their students. Only when the curriculum canon is transformed to reflect

cultural diversity will students in our schools, colleges, and universities be able to attain the knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed to participate effectively in today's global society.

Multicultural Education and National Survival

Multicultural education is needed to help all future citizens of the United States to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to survive in the 21st century. Nothing less than our national and global survival is at stake (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The rapid growth in the nation's population of people of color; the escalating importance of non-White nations such as China and India; and the widening gap between the rich and the poor (Stiglitz, 2012) make it essential for future citizens to have multicultural literacy and cross-cultural skills. A nation whose citizens cannot negotiate on the world's multicultural global stage are tremendously disadvantaged in the 21st century, and its very survival is imperiled.