1

Common Practices

How Are We Currently Preparing Educators for Diverse Classrooms?

Introduction

In this chapter, we discuss several tried-and-true methods for preparing educators to be culturally competent to teach diverse learners in today's multicultural, multilinguistic classrooms by using a variety of readings, videos, discussion topics, and activities designed to help educators become more knowledgeable about the diversity of their students and to build their capacity as culturally responsive educators. To begin, we review several goals commonly used for multicultural education and then describe five key concepts proposed by Milner (2010) for all diversity courses or workshops. We talk about Milner's ideas early because they are key ideas related to our goal of helping educators become *critically* culturally competent. We then review several resources we have used to start educators on their path toward cultural competence. Although the goal of this book is to move multicultural education and diversity training beyond decontextualized knowledge into a more critical exploration

of the self, students, their families, and communities, we begin with a discussion of established practices in multicultural education before helping educators begin to develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of students that includes ways to learn from and value their families and their communities.

Common Goals for Multicultural Education

In recent years, diversity workshops and multicultural education courses typically have some or all of the following goals so that educators will be able to complete the following:

- Demonstrate an awareness of competencies related to educating students from culturally diverse backgrounds based on ethnicity (race, language, national origin, and religion), socio-economic class, gender, age, and the like
- Analyze the "isms" (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, linguicism, ethnocentrism, ageism, and ableism) and their effect on the practice and the institutionalization of schooling
- Describe the legal, historic, and philosophical basis for educating culturally diverse students
- Assess through analysis of readings, videos, case studies, class discussions, and the like educators' dispositions related to teaching diverse learners and working with their families
- Identify several teaching and learning strategies to accommodate the needs of culturally diverse students
- Analyze and evaluate various culturally responsive teaching practices and environments
- Identify national, state, and local resources available to assist educators in planning and implementing instruction for culturally diverse students

These goals are found in many courses and workshops about diverse learners, but they are not exhaustive or inclusive of everything required to meet the needs of today's diverse population of P–12 learners. In fact, we would include these additional goals to assist educators developing critical cultural competence: (1) critical self-reflection and identity work; (2) engaging wholeheartedly with students, families, and communities to assure equity, achievement, and success for all learners; and (3) engaging in transformative actions that will lead to change in local educational settings.

Foundational Understandings About Diversity

Milner's Five Conceptual Repertoires of Diversity

In this book, we share our ideas for engaging educators in activities that promote the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to develop critical cultural competence. Before doing that, however, we introduce key conceptual repertoires needed for developing critical cultural competence. Milner (2010) suggests that the following five concepts should be directly addressed in the curriculum of every diversity course or workshop for educators: (1) *color blindness*, (2) *cultural conflict*, (3) *the myth of meritocracy*, (4) *deficit conceptions*, and (5) *expectations*. Although Milner does not claim this to be an exhaustive list, he suggests that developing a deep and complex understanding of these five "conceptual repertoires" should be the common core for any diversity curriculum (Milner, 2010, p. 119), and we agree wholeheartedly.

Color-blindness. When we hear teachers say, "I don't see color. I just teach children!" we get very concerned because such thinking denies a very important aspect of the identity of children of color; ignores their families' heritage and history; and discounts their larger racial, ethnic, or language community. When some educators say things such as, "I don't see color. I treat all my students the same," they may not realize that the underlying meaning could be the following:

- "I don't see *my* color. I don't want to think about how my racial and ethnic identity may have given me privilege in society."
- "I choose not to see my students' color. I don't want to admit that I may have biases or personal assumptions about certain groups of people. Ignoring my students' racial and ethnic differences allows me not to have to face my biases."
- "I don't feel comfortable talking about racial and ethnic differences because that makes me sound like a racist. My parents taught me not to mention race or racial differences. I don't know when it is appropriate to treat students differently, or how to do that, and I don't want to take the risk of making any mistakes in learning to do so."

Being color-blind can also limit educators seeing the many assets and strengths that children of color bring into classrooms and schools via their families and historic backgrounds. Therefore, when educators say they treat all their students the same because that is the fair thing to do, we are concerned because this often means they are not

giving students what they need as individuals, which is what we call the practice of equity pedagogy (C. A. M. Banks & Banks, 1995). Besides, working with children and families of color can only help broaden our knowledge and perspectives, making us better professionally and personally because we are exposed to different ways that people make sense of their experiences and view the world. Regarding color-blindness, Milner (2010) states that

> Teachers who adopt a color-blind approach often do not possess the racial knowledge necessary for pedagogical success with diverse students, especially students who are placed on the margins of teaching and learning based on their racialized interactions and experiences inside and outside of the classroom. (p. 121)

Milner (2010) also quotes James Banks (2001) regarding the consequences of educators' maintaining a color-blind approach when Banks wrote:

> A statement such as "I don't see color" reveals a privileged position that refuses to legitimize racial identifications that are very important to people of color and that are often used to justify inaction and perpetuation of the status quo. (2001, p. 12)

We agree with Banks (2001) and Milner (2010) that taking a color-blind approach prevents educators from understanding and including the lived experiences of students of color, and it makes White culture the norm to which all students are compared and judged. Other potential sources of color-blind statements include lack of knowledge about or confidence in discussing inequalities because of race, ethnicity, and language; avoidance of facing potential personal biases; or fear of being judged when taking risks to pursue equity in education. Nevertheless, we believe, as Lisa Delpit (1995) says, "If one does not see color, one does not really see children" (p. 177).

Further, taking a color-blind approach misleads educators regarding the practice of equality versus equity. Students need to be recognized and understood through the lenses by which they and their families are viewed and perceived by the world. To not see color is tantamount to not seeing who students really are and the uniqueness of the cultures they bring to school. At a minimum, readings, discussions, and activities to address the concept of color-blindness should be included in any diversity curriculum. This is especially important

because most teachers today are White, female, and monolingual, while most students come from different ethnic, cultural, religious, language, and economic backgrounds (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005).

Cultural conflict. Regarding cultural conflict and issues of power, Milner (2010) makes the case for addressing cultural conflict as foundational to any diversity curriculum because

> When teachers operate mostly or solely from their own cultural references and ways of knowing and experiencing the world, the learning milieu can seem foreign to students of color, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, students whose first language is not English, and students who live or have lived in different regions of the country or world. Cultural conflicts in the classroom can result in negative consequences for such students because there are few points of reference and convergence between teachers and students. (p. 122)

Citing Lisa Delpit's (1995) work in describing the culture of power, Milner (2010) discusses the cultural mismatch between students and their teachers as described previously. He also reinforces Delpit's call to explicitly teach students so that they have access to the "language of power" and, therefore, understand the rules and expectations at play both inside and outside today's classrooms. Toward this end, Milner elaborates this point and makes this suggestion:

> Teachers and students should locate common cultural connections to optimize instructional and learning opportunities in social contexts. . . . Knowing what the culture of power actually is, how it works, and how power can be achieved are important conceptual understandings for P–12 student success and should thus be part of both the explicit and implicit curriculum of teacher education. (pp. 122–123)

We agree that confronting issues related to cultural conflict must be a part of every diversity curriculum. Reading Lisa Delpit's (1995) book, as well as other works by such scholars as James Banks, Geneva Gay, bell hooks, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Carol Lee, Sonia Nieto, Christine Sleeter, and others, is one way to do this. Case studies and classic and contemporary videos can be a catalyst for discussions of cultural norms, power, and cultural conflict. These activities are considered "safe" in many multicultural education courses and diversity

workshops today, but we believe they may not actually affect the beliefs and dispositions of educators without additional self-reflection and actual experiences in diverse communities.

Myth of meritocracy. Another core concept in any diversity curriculum is confronting what Milner (2010) calls the myth of meritocracy and the role that both white privilege and institutional racism play in perpetuating meritocracy and encouraging deficit-based thinking. Those who believe in meritocracy think that anyone who works hard can live the American Dream and be successful if he just tries hard enough. The truth is that this does not happen for everyone, especially for those who come from communities with poor schools, high unemployment, and a history of being discriminated against and for those who may be recent immigrants or refugees and speak little English. In fact, the myth of meritocracy is obvious in today's economy where citizens who are ready, willing, and able cannot get jobs or get ahead no matter how hard they try. The notion that people can make it if they work hard enough is truly a myth for many, but especially for those from marginalized groups.

White privilege is related to the myth of meritocracy because it offers advantages to some people in our society because light skin color is considered the norm. For example, those of us who are White do not have to think about being followed when we enter a fancy department store or drive through a nice neighborhood, but a young, Black male in these situations might be suspect. White people don't have to think about being denied the chance to rent an apartment or join a country club or apply for certain jobs because of their skin color or their accent. White skin affords many of us unearned privileges that we are not even conscious about and that people of color are often denied or, at least, have to earn, which they are very aware of.

Institutional racism is also connected to the myth of meritocracy and continues to be the legacy of discrimination against people of color regarding policies and practices related to housing, jobs, adequate health care, and education. In other words, while individuals may not discriminate against others, many policies and practices are built into our government, legal, healthcare, and educational institutions that are biased. For example, we still see examples of institutional racism in schools where many students of color are tracked into vocational or tech-prep classes versus honors or advanced placement (AP) classes. In fact, naming the lowest track classes "college-prep" classes in some school systems is a form of institutional racism because not all parents and families realize these classes are the lowest-level classes in the school. Though the name of the class denotes "college prep,"

many parents are not privy to the fact that AP and international baccalaureate (IB) classes are weighted more heavily in a student's grade point average (GPA) and college applications than are college preparatory and honors classes. Biased language on standardized tests are another examples of institutional racism that disadvantages some students, as is requiring English Learners (ELs) take the same high-stakes tests as native English speakers within one or two years of entering our school systems.

The myth of meritocracy may be one of the most challenging aspects of a diversity curriculum for many teachers and administrators to understand because they do not think about, much less critically examine, how they have been privileged by their educational status, their profession, their socioeconomic status, their race, or their gender. Educators may be completely unaware that they judge others against themselves as being the norm, which leads to believing that if they can make it then everyone can make it if they just try hard enough. Further, their "innocent ignorance" about or their "conscious avoidance" (Cooper, 2007, p. 246) of their beliefs about meritocracy may cause students of color to perceive them negatively. As Lisa Delpit (1995) states, "Those in power are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence" (p. 24). For those in power create and maintain the rules for what is and what shall be, just one reason why the myth of meritocracy affects most people of color disproportionately.

As Milner (2010) points out, "The meritocracy argument sometimes rejects institutionalized and systemic issues that permeate policies and practices such as racism, sexism, classism, and discrimination both in the classroom and in society" (p. 124), just as does being color-blind. Among other things, meritocracy can lead to students losing their motivation or giving up and dropping out when they feel they cannot succeed because of their color, their lack of English skills, or their status as residents of particular neighborhoods; and many educators think they just aren't trying hard enough. Not recognizing the myth of meritocracy and one's privilege and position as an educator also leads to deficit conceptions, which should be the fourth core concept in any diversity curriculum.

Deficit conceptions. Challenging deficit-based thinking is another crucial component of any diversity curriculum. Some examples of deficit-based thinking that we often hear concern parents. We hear, "His parents don't even care if he does his homework or not. They never sign his reading log," and "I can't get her parents to come in for

a conference. I've tried several times, and they just don't respond to my notes or phone messages. I don't think they care." When educators assume that parents don't care because they don't send in school supplies or field-trip money or because their child receives free or reduced-priced meals, they make attributions about either the parents or the child based on perceived deficits. If educators assume some students can't achieve academically because of their color, language, shabby clothing, or the neighborhood they come from, they are exhibiting deficit-based thinking. Connecting labels such as limited English proficiency (LEP), English as a second language (ESL), learning disability (LD), or free or reduced meals (FRM) to assumptions about cognitive ability or to perceived gaps in knowledge, skills, or behaviors is deficit-based thinking, which we often find stands in the way of uncovering the strengths of children with such labels. As Milner says,

> Teachers who hold deficit beliefs about students from lower socioeconomic statuses sometimes deliberately avoid including information and skill development in the curriculum. Higher level thinking skills or the skills to critique or analyze content may be purposefully avoided. . . . Deficit conceptions make it difficult for teachers to use what students bring into the learning environment as a place to start and as a place of possibility. While deficit conceptions—can shape teachers' explicit and implicit curriculum—what teachers refuse to cover and include in the curriculum—can also detrimentally shape student learning opportunities. . . . Different from the White majority is sometimes perceived as insufficient, and deficit conceptions manifest in teachers' curriculum practices to the disadvantage of culturally diverse students. (2010, pp. 124–125)

Expectations. The opposite of holding deficit conceptions about people who look or sound different is holding high expectations for all, recognizing the "funds of knowledge" that students bring into the classroom from their families and home communities (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) and providing the supports needed by each student to be successful in school. Lowering expectations and giving easy work to protect students' self-esteem is naïve at best, and it undermines the purpose of educating students. Furthermore, accepting mediocrity from students, Milner (2010) claims, indicates we do not believe students are capable or do not have the capacity to be successful (p. 125). Dumbing down the curriculum is an easy trap to

fall into if educators don't hold high expectations for every student. We believe that not having high expectations for every one of our students is also an issue of social justice.

Resource 1.1 *Milner's (2010) Conceptual Repertoires About Diversity*, which is located on the companion website for this book, provides further details about each of the five conceptual repertoires suggested by Milner (2010). This resource includes typical assertions made by educators about why they may resist these concepts and the instructional consequences of such resistance. We provide this information to assist those who lead discussions about these important topics because acquiring new knowledge about different ways we describe our students; about culturally responsive teaching practices; and about the concepts of color-blindness, cultural conflict, the myth of meritocracy, deficit conceptions, and expectations can be a catalyst for changing our usual ways of thinking about equity and diversity.

Empathy Versus Sympathy

Two additional values guide the development and design of the activities detailed in this book: (1) development of empathy (rather than sympathy) and (2) the use of a strength-based approach. Although it may seem obvious, we want to ensure that educators understand the difference between empathy and sympathy. In our view, empathy is about understanding another's experiences and perspectives well enough to feel that we have walked in their shoes. Being empathetic is experiencing something vicariously—being able to imagine the circumstances and the feelings of others. Sympathy, however, can imply pity or sorrow for others, which often reflects a deficit-based way of thinking about others. We certainly do not want educators to pity our guest speakers, the real-life experiences of the characters portrayed in videos or books, their students, or their students' families and communities. Rather, we want educators to better understand other people's lives through various real-world, and sometimes vicarious, experiences presented later in this book. We want educators to be empathetic so that they will be moved to action but not with shame or disappointment regarding other people's lives. Therefore, we promote a strength-based approach when discussing differences among ourselves, our students, and their families and communities. We consistently make the points that different does not equal bad and that treating people equitably does not mean treating everyone the same. We also work hard to help educators understand that dealing with, enduring through, and overcoming

adverse experiences can result in the development of valuable, non-cognitive skills (e.g., leadership), real-life problem solving, and per-severance (Rothstein, 2004). In other words, strength can be derived from adversity, too. We advocate for a strength-based perspective during group discussions, in the presence of guest speakers, during brainstorming sessions, and in case discussions. Strength-based thinking permeates our work, our discussions, and our thinking, and we advocate for this perspective throughout this book

Strength-Based Approach

The strength-based approach we have adopted, which is part of a system of care approach, originally comes from the field of social work (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989; Saleebey, 1992). For example, we see great strengths in students from low-income neigh-borhoods who have extended family members or neighbors who look after them when their primary caregiver is working. They are not left on their own, but, instead, they are cared for, fed, helped with home-work, and often clothed or housed by their extended family. Further, the local Boys and Girls Club, the neighborhood library, and the fam-ily's church community are also assets in their system of care because they serve as supports for the child and the family on many fronts. Such a support network is a real strength for many students, and each aspect of this support network provides an education for children outside of the schoolhouse. They learn important lessons and values from their extended family that may not be recognized in school. For example, they may be resilient, generous to others, or good at prob-lem solving or creative thinking because these are dispositions and skills modeled by their extended family and community.

Educators, especially those interested in working effectively with families and communities, embrace the strength-based approach. A strength-based approach recognizes that all people have strengths, though they have often been untapped or unrecognized. Whether internal or environmental, strengths serve to motivate people toward continued growth (Saleebey, 1992). All children and families have unique talents, skills, and life events that can be used to build, sus-tain, and maintain communities. For example, students from immi-grant and refugee families often learn English more quickly than their parents and serve as translators of both the language and the culture. These students learn very quickly about various transportation, employment, and government systems so they can help their parents access services available to them. How families work through such

situations requires strength and skill that can be creatively transferred to school, if teachers, administrators, and schools are aware of them and see them as assets.

Materials and Resources

Textbooks

In typical multicultural education courses or workshops, many excellent reading materials and resources have been used to prepare educators to increase their knowledge and to broaden their thinking about diversity. In the following two sections, we highlight materials we think provide foundational information regarding diversity. We also review commonly used, conventional approaches we have used in professional development workshops related to diversity issues. You can find some textbooks we have used listed in Resource 1.2 *Textbooks Recommended for Learning About Diversity* on this book's companion website.

Historic and Contemporary Videos

Showing excerpts from videos during diversity workshops is another favorite for building background knowledge, especially when there are younger educators for whom the Civil Rights Movement and segregation, for example, are historic events that occurred well before they were born. We have used videos over the years to fill gaps in knowledge or to provide powerful personal, albeit vicarious, experiences with segregation. We use videos because the visual depiction of the lives of people different from ourselves is often a catalyst for decentering our experiences and seems to help develop empathy. Additionally, we ask educators to view newly released or classic full-length videos at home. We then discuss the implicit and explicit messages about the diversity of the characters and the ways they were portrayed on film, always taking a strength-based approach. These discussions occur either face-to-face or online and in small groups because we encourage educators to choose the videos they want to watch rather than have everyone watch the same video. Resource 1.3 *Recommended Videos*, located on this book's companion website, provides a list of videos we have used and recommend for professional development. Although not an exhaustive list, it provides a starting point of readily accessible videos to choose from.

When we debrief videos, we guide educators to acknowledge and critique how the media play out diversity issues. Media portrayals of people's lived experiences should be critiqued carefully from more than one point of view, and many of the questions we discuss with educators push them to take a more critical look at what they viewed. For instance, some videos tend to confirm missionary-zeal beliefs, savior complexes, or great White/Black hope visions. An example of critical reflection prompts for two of the videos we used recently, *Mad Hot Ballroom* and *Akeelah and the Bee*, are provided here to show the types of reflective questions we ask.

Mad Hot Ballroom is an inspiring look inside the lives of New York City school kids on a journey into the world of ballroom dancing, an unexpected arena where they discover new frontiers about attitude, movement, style, and commitment (Officialmoviepage.com, 2010). In this movie, fifth-grade children from low-income families learn ballroom dances, and they compete in a districtwide competition. They learn many lessons through a forum that does not label them with descriptors, Bernice Lott (2001) notes in her literature review on low-income parents/families.

- If learning and the general school experience is all about exposure to the unfamiliar or unthinkable to populations considered at times not worthy, what else could ultimately improve our nation's schools and student achievement?
- Or is lack of exposure another form of *hegemony* (the dominance of one group over other groups, with or without the threat of force, to the extent that, for instance, the dominant party can dictate the terms of trade to its advantage)?
- Why do we make assumptions that others are not interested in middle-class values or cultural capital as deemed important by the powers that be?

How does this movie speak to you and the translation of your beliefs into actions?

Akeelah and the Bee is about a young girl from an inner-city neighborhood who has the phenomenal ability to spell complicated words. She does not realize her ability because of family issues and peer pressure. However, when she does, she dreams *big*. How she evolves in the movie is an example of defying great odds to succeed in areas often assumed that a person like her, from where she comes, and her background, would not often expect. Many messages are shared in this movie.

There are messages about self-esteem, family, community, peer pressure, and teacher expectations, to name a few.

- How does this movie speak to you?
- Have you known any persons like her?
- Have you taught any "Akeelahs" in your teaching experience?
- More important, have you known students like Akeelah and not realized their potential because of their background, who they were, or the like? While you may not admit it about yourself, I am sure that you certainly know colleagues who have done so.
- Did you think that Akeelah's community would respond to her and her plight as they did? After all, she comes from a community where so many people believe that "the parents don't care about their children."
- Have you ever thought that way about the communities of your learners?

Online Learning Resources

One other knowledge-building resource that we use is the IRIS Center materials located online at http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu. This website contains multiple resources including online modules, case studies, interactive activities, information briefs, and podcasts. Some of our favorite resources on this website are the STAR Legacy Modules. We often require educators to complete one or more of these online modules, and then we hold discussions about the content either face-to-face or online. One section of the IRIS Center materials focuses on diversity issues, and there are other materials about accommodations, accountability, assessment, behavior and classroom management, collaboration, content instruction (in math, reading, and writing), differentiation, learning strategies, Response to Intervention (RTI), school improvement, and school leadership. We especially like to assign two of the STAR Legacy modules titled "Cultural and Linguistic Differences: What Teachers Should Know" and "Universal Design for Learning" because they address factors to consider when working with culturally and linguistically diverse students in school settings. Although there is much information in these modules, we usually provide additional readings to supplement the information in each module. For example, with the module called "Cultural and Linguistic Differences: What Teacher Should Know," we usually assign two or three chapters from *Con Respeto* by Guadalupe Valdes to provide additional background knowledge about Mexican-heritage families. We also develop higher-order discussion questions, even though there are thought questions provided at the start of each module and assessment questions at the end.

Guest Speakers

We often use guest speakers as another resource because they can talk personally about issues with which we are not familiar or have not experienced ourselves. Choosing guest speakers has been very successful, especially when the group members are the same age, speak the same language, or are from the same profession as the presenters. Seeing and hearing from people with firsthand experience is much more powerful for developing empathy and for seeing how a strength-based approach actually works rather than reading about the same experience. For example, we ask professional educators who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered to discuss how they experience being different from the rest of the people with whom they work, as well as from most parents. We also ask parents of students with disabilities, as well as students who are living with disabilities, to speak about their or their children's experiences with school. Panels of presenters always seem to be better received than does a single presenter because of the range of perspectives they bring to the topic. Panels of guest speakers may be even more powerful than reading books or seeing videos because the audience can ask questions of guest speakers. Further, hearing authentic voices provides them with information about their lived experiences, debunks many stereotypes, sometimes engenders empathy, and often serves as a catalyst to do more for marginalized students and their families. Finally, listening to others' experiences helps educators better understand what not to do, say, or allow in their classrooms. In other words, panel members are experts of their lived experiences and become our teachers, offering ways we can most effectively teach and reach students in similar, yet different circumstances.

Other Commonly Used Activities and Approaches

The resources mentioned previously engage educators in thinking and learning about diversity, and help them gain cultural competence. As teacher educators and professional development facilitators, we have also used other approaches or activities to encourage active participation in the learning process. Some of the more traditional approaches we have used are described in the next section. While these activities take place mainly inside the school, activities we use that take educators' learning outside of school are described in later chapters, as we discuss developing critical cultural competence.

Nevertheless, discussions and reflections are something we use regularly in all our diversity workshops.

Discussions and Reflection

Reflection has long been advocated in the literature as a vital means of investigating the personal and professional self (Schmidt, 1999; Schön, 1996; Zeichner, 1993), and we find that discussion is most useful when it takes place after educators have had a chance to think about and reflect on what they have read, seen, or experienced. Through various opportunities for reflection, educators recognize how and why they have come to believe as they do about people who are different from them or the issues raised in readings, videos, and discussions they have with others.

Even when we introduce a new topic, we often begin by having educators reflect in writing or orally in discussion with peers (which we call sometimes call base groups, talking partners, or learning pods). For example, we might ask them to define what they think the differences are between race, ethnicity, and culture. Or we may ask for their written reactions to an article they read about the social construction of race and ethnicity (Applebaum, 2003; Jewett, 2006; Khanna & Harris, 2009) prior to discussing this topic with peers in small or large groups. Alternatively, we might lead a brainstorming session to generate words associated with topics, such as sex and gender, ageism, or students with disabilities, purposefully to uncover the range of associations, beliefs, and ideas and to acknowledge any prior knowledge about the topic. For example, in our initial sessions on diverse learners, we write on the board every term that participants associate with the concept of culture. Words are very powerful carriers of our feelings and understandings about different concepts, as well as expressions of our biases and stereotypes. Therefore, we purposefully choose potentially controversial terms, such as "affirmative action" or "meritocracy" or "White privilege" to promote reflection on educators' beliefs about these topics.

Sometimes we do these brainstorming exercises in online forums, either synchronously in chat rooms or on a wiki, or asynchronously using blogs or discussion boards. When educators are asked to respond to one another, whether face-to-face or in online forums, we often find they can teach one another, sometimes better than we can. However, expressions of one's beliefs and feelings may include stereotypes and biases. If the goal is not only to increase knowledge and

self-knowledge but also to develop critical cultural competence, we have found that a combination of public and private self-reflection has been more effective than one or the other. Public statements have the advantage of allowing (and sometimes requiring) people to justify themselves to others, but not everyone is brave enough to express her beliefs in public. Private opportunities for written reflection, by contrast, offer opportunities to reveal one's beliefs without the fear of being judged. However, we recognize that some educators may mask their private beliefs in politically correct language in any context. In such cases, reflection as a means of helping educators become more self-aware may not immediately be visible, and may require feedback from a skillful facilitator to challenge and, perhaps, advance the perceptions of some.

In our experience, however, reflection by itself is insufficient for increasing critical cultural competence, thus, multiple experiences and opportunities followed by public and private reflection are necessary for developing critical cultural competence. New and experienced educators need to read, view videos, and listen to guest speakers to increase their knowledge base and to fill in gaps in their experience and understanding. They also need to uncover, confront, and address their personal beliefs and misconceptions. Discussion along with reflection adds value by requiring that educators explain their thinking. This is a crucial step. Similarly, we know change cannot happen unless the context for discussion and reflection feels safe to participants. Therefore, we establish norms with each group about active listening and respectful disagreement, and we model these behaviors at all times. Sometimes, we repeat back what we hear; sometimes, we ask what others think. We have also learned to handle controversy when something someone says crosses the line for another person in the group. And we learn from each group of educators we encounter.

Case Studies and Case Discussions

In addition to using textbooks, videos, online materials, and guest speakers to help educators develop their knowledge base, build empathy, and better understand social justice issues, we also use case studies to build self-knowledge and empathy and to practice taking a strength-based approach. The personal nature of the stories of real individuals in case studies and vignettes seems to allow people to decenter and focus on the issues in the case. At the same time, cases can be catalysts for educators reflecting about how they might respond personally to the case if they were in a similar situation. We

usually take a problem-solving approach while discussing cases, although there are many purposes for using cases. Most often, we try to separate the facts of the case from the inferences we make about the people and situations in the case and then move on to naming the issues in the case and explaining importance to us as teachers, administrators, or parents. Next, we select specific issues or problems from the case and brainstorm potential solutions. As the facilitators of a case discussion, we always try to remind the participants to take a strength-based, rather than deficit, approach when trying to find solutions to the issues identified in the case. We also remind educators to apply any readings, videos, or personal experiences to the issues in the cases. Finally, we discuss the pros and cons of each potential solution, once again trying to take a strength-based perspective. Because there is no one right answer to the problems raised by any particular case, we also try to prioritize solutions or determine their short-term or long-term application.

Book Clubs

As much as we find textbooks and articles to be valuable resources, we find that many educators are more motivated by and interested in reading other kinds of books. One tried–and-true activity we use to increase cultural competence is book clubs. We usually offer several choices for a book club reading because we know that having choices is motivating. Once participants have made their book club selection from a group of recommended books, we conduct book club discussions in several different ways. Over the years, some of these include small groups reading the same book and meet face-to-face several times for discussion. This strategy operates similarly to literature circles used in schools (Daniels, 2002; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Usually, each book club group sets the amount of reading to be completed for each of these discussions and is self-directed during its discussions. Sometimes, we suggest participants take roles in their book clubs to experience what it might be like to do book clubs or literature circles with students. For example, sometimes, they take turns being the discussion director, the connection maker, the summarizer, the word wizard, or the passage picker (Raphael, 1994). We have also used online discussions among book club members with good success, and we think professional learning communities (PLCs) are ideal groups with which to engage in book club discussions. Finally, we have been especially successful with book club when using a jigsaw approach to reading both books and articles or chapters.

ACTIVITY 1.1 BOOK CLUB JIGSAW ACTIVITY

Objectives

- To read books related to cultural diversity
- To represent our understanding of the book using graphic organizers
- To share our thoughts through reflections and discussions

Instruction to Participants

Have participants select a book from the list located in Resource 1.4 *Book Club List* on this book's companion website. Group the participants based on the book they select from the list you provide. Participants meet to discuss their book with those who have read the same book. Then they meet at a different time in new groups where everyone has read a different book and serves as expert for this book. Experts share what they learned from and what they liked or disliked about the book they read. In our book clubs, we also ask each person to create some kind of graphic or graphic organizer to represent visually the most important parts of their book. We find that requiring visual representations of the content and of the most important messages in their books forces most educators to think outside the box because they have to use more than words to represent their book. Teachers and administrators are very creative, and their graphic representations can be completed by hand or by using a computer, whichever they prefer. Copies of their graphics representations are then provided to other jigsaw group members, who have not read that book, as handouts. These representations serve as talking points for the book expert and as references for future reading by others in the jigsaw groups. An example of a book club graphic is provided in Resource 1.5 *Book Club Graphics* for *Train Go Sorry by Leah Hager Cohen* on this book's companion website so you can provide an example to those in your professional development sessions.

Games and Simulations

Games and simulations, such as Barnga and BaFa BaFa, or the version of Monopoly described later, are excellent catalysts for discussing how diversity impacts cross-cultural communication and other topics related to developing critical cultural competence. We sometimes play Barnga (Thiagarajan, 2006), which serve as a simulation of cross-cultural communication for understanding cultural clashes and ESL students' experiences. Barnga is a card game where different groups of people play cards with one another using different rules at each table. The trick is that players are not allowed to communicate orally at any time during or between games. Once the participants in each group have played a few rounds based on the rules they were given, winners and losers move to different groups and start playing again—still

without talking. However, in these new groups, players are playing with different rules, so they have to figure out how they are going to play together under these new circumstances, and conflicts start to occur. How various players handle themselves when the rules have changed is important to process when the allotted time is up. As with all games and simulations, the discussion afterward deserves serious time and needs to be planned by the group leader so that discussion moves beyond personal experience of the game to explore the underlying issues related to cultural diversity.

Other games and simulations can offer similar experiences to people involved, although they may be more complex and take more time to play than Barnga. BaFa BaFa, for example, is a simulation that helps participants better understand how different groups approach common aspects of culture, such as ways of communicating, personal space, gender interactions, relationships between superiors and subordinates, and rules that guide social interactions. In BaFa BaFa, participants are placed in two different "cultural" groups with different sets of rules and expectations, and then they interact with the other group over an hour or so. Visitors and observers who only understand their norms then try to figure out how to trade successfully with the other cultural group. Resulting missteps, misperceptions, and stereotypes experienced by the participants become the basis for debriefing about the impact of cultural norms on our interactions in a multicultural society.

The Game of Monopoly

Objective

- To experience vicariously inequities such as racism, privilege, institutional racism by playing a modified version of Monopoly

Instruction to Participants

Another game we use in multicultural education classes and diversity workshops is a version of Monopoly that provides players with a "metaphorical explanation of issues of racism, institutional racism, and White privilege" (Jost, Whitfield, & Jost, 2005, p. 16). The rules of the traditional game of Monopoly are slightly modified, including the number of actual players and the inclusion of volunteers. Typically, six to eight players are needed, which includes a volunteer banker and a volunteer observer. This version of Monopoly is a great learning activity because it allows active engagement with societal issues and actions that are realities for some groups and unrealities for others. The only change in rules is

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that while two players start the game, two more don't enter the game until 30 to 40 minutes later (or after five to seven rounds), and two more players enter the game another 30 to 40 minutes after that (or after another five to seven rounds).

Recommended Questions Following the Activity (I=Individual Reflection Questions, G=Group Discussion Questions)

It is important to note, however, that for real understanding to occur prior preparation for playing this version of Monopoly should include reading about the history of dominated cultures (Jost et al., 2005). It is important for educators to understand, for example, historic inequities in education for students of color, affirmative action policies, institutional racism, the achievement gap, and White privilege. After the game, the players' insights must be shared, processed, and deconstructed. However, the game as a metaphor of racial inequities in schools and society, affirmative action, and privilege must be unveiled if the players don't explicitly state it themselves. Instructions recommended for debriefing this game with the whole group can be found in Resource 1.6 *Debriefing the Game of Monopoly* on this book's companion website.

Other reflection questions following games and simulations like Barga, BaFa BaFa, or this version of Monopoly can include the following:

- What did you learn about yourself participating in this game/simulation? (I, G)
- What did you learn about other people who participated with you? (I, G)
- In what ways does this the purpose of this game/simulation relate to the development of critical cultural competence? (I, G)

Empathy Activities

In past workshops and classes, we have included what we call empathy activities like the trust walk or blind walk. This activity is done with one partner blindfolded and the other partner responsible for helping the "blind" person navigate safely in a classroom, a school, or the community. We have also had educators experience what it might be like to be in wheelchair to get around and to have a sight or hearing impairment. By putting educators in groups with one in a wheelchair, one with petroleum jelly smeared on his glasses or blindfolded, and with one wearing earplugs, we send them out to run errands at certain locations so that they can begin to empathize with the struggles many people with disabilities face every day. Of course, the limitation of this exercise is that participants can get out of the wheelchair anytime they want, take off the glasses, and remove the earphones. Therefore, participants only get a glimpse of what it must

be like to have a disability for less than an hour of their life. As a result, this activity by itself (as most of the activities in this book) has limited use when done in singly or in isolation from other activities. Yet it raises awareness and can be a catalyst for deeper discussions about abilities and disabilities. And although we often ask guest speakers with motor or visual disabilities to help us debrief these kinds of activities and to demonstrate a particular disability in a more realistic manner, these activities have limited use.

We have tried other ways to develop deeper awareness, knowledge, and empathy for other struggles that the families of students in our schools experience by extending some empathy awareness activities to last for up to seven days. For example, we have asked educators to choose and engage in one of the following activities:

- Take only public transportation for one week
- Eat on $5 per day for a week
- Wear the same clothes for a week
- Live on a budget of $100 a week to include all food, transportation, shelter, clothing, and entertainment

Once again, debriefing is key so that the result is the development of empathy, and not sympathy, for those less privileged. Reflection on these events indicates that they serve as a positive step in the direction of developing cultural competence but are not sufficient in and of themselves. Therefore, in later chapters, we discuss some community adventures we have developed and used with educators to develop empathy. We do this because in our experience more personal experience with families and in the community is needed to develop critical cultural competence beyond engagement with the common resources and activities discussed in this chapter. We believe the kinds of activities that get teachers and administrators out of their comfort zone and out of their classrooms or schools and into the community, which most of the activities described in this chapter do not, are needed to move from cultural awareness to cultural competence and finally to critical cultural competence. Therefore, in upcoming chapters we focus in more depth on the three key elements for developing critical cultural competence: understanding of self, students, and parents and communities.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

In this chapter, we reviewed typical goals often used in multicultural education and diversity workshops and described in more detail

several core concepts and values that undergird the kinds of activities for developing critical cultural competence presented throughout this book. In addition, we described resources and activities that are commonly used in diversity workshops as ways to develop foundational knowledge. However, in this book we strive to go beyond knowledge and to provide activities to develop educators with critical cultural competence.

- Richard Milner (2010) suggested that that developing a deep and complex understanding of the five conceptual repertoires should be the common core for any diversity curriculum. These concepts include (1) color-blindness, (2) cultural conflict, (3) the myth of meritocracy, (4) deficit conceptions, and (5) expectations. In this book, we share ideas to challenge educators in these five repertoires, build empathy, and enable them to use a strength-base approach in their work in the diverse communities within and beyond school settings.
- Resources and materials including textbooks, videos, online resources, guest speakers, and additional readings are shared to support further discussions and to engage educators in critical thinking and reflection.
- Commonly used approaches including discussions and reflections, book clubs, case studies and case discussions, simulation and other games, and empathy-development activities are also shared.

REFLECTION AND EXTENSION

Reflecting on your experiences attending or leading diversity courses and workshops, answer the following

- What are the resources and materials you have used with good success?
- What are some of your favorite and most engaging activities?
- What are the most challenging questions you hear from educators?

ONLINE EXTENSIONS

When we teach online versions of our multicultural education courses and diversity workshops, we often use a wiki for brainstorming everything the participants think they know about a topic such as culture, to

compare their thoughts on race and ethnicity, or find their associations with the words "gender" and "sexual orientation." We do this before further readings about or discussion of these topics, and then we collect all the words from our brainstorming on the wiki (or sometimes from the saved script of a live chat) and put them into an online program like Wordle or WordSift. These free tools found on the Internet create word clouds or tag clouds that sort and display the words so that the most frequently used words show up as the most prominent in a collage of all the words submitted. The results are then shared with the group to elicit further reflection and discussion. The content of any text, web page, blog, wiki, chat room, and so on can be cut and pasted into Wordle or Wordsift to provide a visual representation of the prominent, and perhaps most important, words in that text. Although the results can be surprising at times, these tools offer the opportunity to visualize what the discussion of a particular topic emphasized. In addition, Wordle.com and, especially, WordSift.com both have some additional features that teachers find useful in other contexts than our online workshops. These features can be especially useful in assisting ELs with learning key vocabulary in the various texts they have to comprehend. What you see next is the results of pasting the entire text of this chapter into WordSift.com and sorting the words from rare to common. As you can see, the most prominent words used in this chapter include *student*, *educator*, *book*, *teacher*, *diversity*, and *discussion.*

Created by Dr. Kenji Hakuta, Stanford University.

Resource 1.1   Milner's (2010) Conceptual Repertoire for Diversity

(Milner, H. R. IV. (2010). What does teacher education have to do with teaching? Implications for diversity studies. *Journal of Teaching Education 61*, 118–131.)

Concepts	Explanations	Teacher's Assertions	Instructional Consequences
Color-blindness (conceptions of race matter)	• Teachers avoid and reject their own and their students' racialized experiences in their decision making. • Teachers use race as a taboo topic that is irrelevant and inconsequential to the success of their students. • Teachers do not recognize the multiple layers of privilege associated with their race and how race can manifest in teaching, learning, and curricula experiences.	• If I acknowledge the racial or ethnic background of my students or myself, then I may be considered racist. • If I admit that people experience the world differently and that race is an important dimension of people's experiences, I may be seen as "politically incorrect." • I may offend others in the teacher education classroom discourse if I express my beliefs and reservations about race. • I should treat all my students the same regardless of who they are, what their home situations are, or what their or what their experiences happen to be.	• Teachers teach their students in a myopic manner; they do not consider how racially diverse students experience the world inside the classroom, inside the school, and in society. • Curriculum and instructional decisions are grounded in a White norm that students of color just have to deal with.

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Resource 1.2   Textbooks Recommended for Learning About Diversity

Banks, J. A. (2007). *Educating citizens in a multicultural society* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
Banks, J. A. (2008). *An introduction to multicultural education* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Allyn & Bacon.
Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. M. (2007). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (6th ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
Bennett, C. I. (2011). *Multicultural education: Theory and Practice* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Allyn & Bacon.
Cole, R. W. (Ed.). (2001). *More strategies for educating everybody's children*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
Cole, R. W. (Ed.). (2008). *Educating everybody's children: Diverse teaching strategies for diverse learners* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
Davidman, L., & Davidman, P. T. (2001). *Teaching with a multicultural perspective: A practical guide* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Longman.
Gay, G. (Ed.). (2003). *Becoming multicultural educators: A personal journey toward professional agency*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, & practice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
Golnick, D., & Chinn, P. (2009). *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
Grant, C. A., & Sleeter, E. C. (2008). *Turning on learning: Five approaches for multicultural teaching plans for race, class, gender, and disability* (5th ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
Grant, C. A., & Sleeter, C. E. (2011). *Doing multicultural education for achievement and equity* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
Hollins, E. R. (2008). *Culture in school learning: Revealing the deep meaning* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
Langer de Ramirez, L. (2006). *Voices of diversity: Stories, activities, and resources for the multicultural classroom*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
Sheets, R. H. (2005). *Diversity pedagogy: Examining the role of culture in the teaching-learning process*. New York, NY: Pearson Allyn and Bacon.
Sleeter, C. E., & Grant, C.A. (2007). *Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender* (6th ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.

Resource 1.3   Recommended Videos

- *ABC News 20/20—The Secret Life of Boys*
- *ABC News 20/20—The Difference Between Men & Women*
- *Akeelah and the Bee*
- *Between Worlds*
- *Boys and Girls Are Different: Men, Women, and the Sex Difference*
- *Crash*
- *Dangerous Minds*
- *Dead Poet's Society*
- *Eye of the Storm*, about a classroom experiment in discrimination in 1970, also known as the blue eyes, brown eyes experiment
- *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (1954–1965)*
- *Finding Forrester*
- *Freedom Writers*
- *How Difficult Can This Be: F.A.T. City, A Learning Disabilities Workshop*
- *I Am Sam*
- *In This World*
- *It's So Much Work to Be Your Friend: Helping the Learning Disabled Child Find Social Success*
- *Mad Hot Ballroom*
- *Matters of Race*
- *Mona Lisa Smile*
- *People Like Us: Social Class in America*
- *Radio*
- *Separate but Equal*
- *Spellbound*
- *Stand and Deliver*
- *The Great Debaters*
- *The Untold Story of Emmett Till*
- *30 Days (Minimum Wage and Immigration Segments)*
- *Under the Moon*
- *Which Way Home*

Resource 1.4   Book Club List

Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press.
Fu, D. (1995). *My trouble is my English*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton.
Hayden, T. (1981). *One child*. New York, NY: Avon.
hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress*. London: Routledge.
hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Howard, G. R. (1999). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
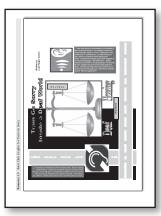Igoa, C. (1995). *The inner world of the immigrant child*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Jimenez, F. (1999). *The circuit: Stories from the life of a migrant child*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.
Jimenez, F. (2002). *Breaking through*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.
Jimenez, F. (2009). *Reaching out*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.
Kindlon, D., & Thompson, M. (2000). *Raising Cain: Protecting the emotional life of boys*. New York, NY: Ballentine Books.
Kotlowitz, A. (1992). *There are no children here: The story of two boys growing up in the other America*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.
Kozol, J. (2000). *Ordinary resurrections: Children in the years of hope*. New York, NY: Crown.
Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Ladson-Billings, G. (2001). *Crossing over to Canaan*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Landsman, J. (2001). *A White teacher talks about race*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press.
Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Los Angeles, CA: University California Press.
Michie, G. (2009). *Holler if you hear me: The education of a teacher and his students* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
Mortenson, G., & Relfin, D. O. (2007). *Three cups of tea: One man's mission to promote peace . . . one school at a time*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
Murrell, Jr., P. C. (2007). *Race, culture, and schooling: Identities of achievement in multicultural urban schools*. New York, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Nazario, S. (2007). *Enrique's journey*. New York, NY: Random House.
Nieto, S. (2000). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
Nieto, S. (2007). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Longman.
Noguera, P. A., & Wing, J. Y. (2006). *Unfinished business: Closing the racial achievement gap in our schools*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
Pang, V. O., & Cheng, L. L. (Eds.). (1998). *Struggling to be heard: The unmet needs of Asian Pacific American children*. Albany: State University of New York.

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Resource 1.5   Book Club Graphic for *Train Go Sorry*

Resource 1.6   Debriefing the Game of Monopoly

The observer first shares details of the following:

1. Who came first? Who came last?
2. How did the enthusiasm and motivation differ among the students?
3. Describe the process of the accumulation of capital. Who had it? Who didn't?
4. What were some of the comments from the players?
5. What were some spending and buying patterns in the group?

The players then get to share their experiences. The following are prompts used during this presentation:

1. How did you start? What chance did you have to win the game?
2. How did you feel about starting first or having to start the game later?
3. How did you learn the rules of the game in comparison to others?
4. How motivated were you when you started? What happened to your motivation as the game moved on?
5. How much skill is ordinarily involved in Monopoly? How much with these altered rules?

Source: Jost, A., Whitfield, E. L., & Jost, M. (2005). When the rules are fair but the game isn't. *Multicultural Education, 13*(1), 14–21.