MAKING CHOICES FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Five Approaches to Race, Class, and Gender

Sixth Edition

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Making Choices for Multicultural Education

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To Roberto, Ellen, and Ron
and Carl and Alicia

Preface

Our primary reason for writing *Making Choices for Multicultural Education: Five Approaches to Race, Class, and Gender* was to offer the educational community a way of thinking about race, language, culture, class, gender, and disability in teaching. Editions subsequent to the first were also written to serve as a major voice, a repository of references and resources, in the multicultural debates that have ensued since the publication of the first edition in 1988. This sixth edition incorporates recent literature relevant to ongoing struggles and offers continued reflection on and insight into this evolving field of study and practice. More specifically, this edition includes recent demographics, discussion of equity issues in the context of the accountability movement and particularly *No Child Left Behind*, a recasting of the deficit ideology, some inclusion of religion, and research that connects culturally situated teaching and learning with student achievement.

For the first edition we reviewed over 200 articles and 60 books about multicultural education.[1] We have continued our review since then. This investigation is thorough, though not exhaustive, since publications about multicultural education are being released daily. The publications are in many disciplines and are aimed at students and educators at different levels of learning.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION?

People mean different things by the term *multicultural education*. For one thing, they do not always agree on what forms of diversity it addresses. Some people think only about racial or cultural diversity, whereas others conceptualize gender, social class, and additional forms of diversity. At the same time, many people who discuss gender equity, for example, share concerns similar to those of multicultural education advocates but virtually ignore race and culture. Still others conceptualize multicultural education in relationship to issues of public policy, such as immigration (e.g., California's Taxpayers' Protection Act) and bilingualism (e.g., English Only legislation).

In this book we focus on multiple forms of difference that also define unequal positions of power in the United States. These include race, language, social class,

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[1] C. A. Grant & C. E. Sleeter. The literature on multicultural education: Review and analysis, *Educational Review*, 37 (1985), 97–118; C. A. Grant, C. E. Sleeter, & J. E. Anderson. The literature on multicultural education: Review and analysis, Part II, *Educational Studies*, 12 (1986), 47–71; C. E. Sleeter & C. A. Grant, An analysis of multicultural education in the U.S.A., *Harvard Educational Review*, 57 (1987), 421–444.

gender, disability, and sexual orientation. We take the position that schools generally operate in ways that favor the "haves." In Chapter 1, we synthesize data about schooling and the wider social context to support this position. In subsequent chapters, we ask how schooling could work differently to treat diverse groups more equally. We synthesize research and theory underlying five approaches to what multicultural education could mean, and we illustrate these approaches with examples and vignettes, applying each approach to various forms of diversity.

Chapter 2 explores "Teaching the Exceptional and Culturally Different." Teachers who advocate this approach are concerned mainly about helping low-achieving students catch up and succeed in school so that they can "make it" in the mainstream of society. Teachers are not so concerned with criticizing or trying to change the mainstream itself, but rather with building bridges between children and that mainstream.

Chapter 3 examines the "Human Relations" approach, which focuses on improving affective dimensions of the classroom: how students relate to each other, how they feel about themselves, and how they feel about diverse groups in the community and society.

Chapter 4 concentrates on the "Single-Group Studies" approach. Teachers who use this approach teach about one specific group, or one group at a time, such as African Americans, Native Americans, women, or people with disabilities. The approach rests on a great deal of research and theorizing being done in departments of ethnic studies as well as gay and lesbian studies in higher education, making it more complex than many classroom teachers realize at first.

The "Multicultural Education" approach is the focus of Chapter 5. This is the approach long-time advocates of multicultural education have most discussed. It involves complete reform of the entire education process to reflect and support diversity, addressing dimensions of schooling such as curriculum, tracking and grouping, staffing, and testing. It also focuses on improving student achievement, but unlike Chapter 2, it supports the development of a culturally pluralistic mainstream that does not require assimilation for success.

Chapter 6 discusses "Multicultural Social Justice Education," which calls attention to equity issues and empowering young people to make social changes. Like the "Multicultural Education" approach, this one also involves reform of the entire education process, but it focuses much more explicitly on social critique and democratic citizen participation.

We believe that educators need to be very clear about what multicultural education means to them. What goals do they actually have in mind? What are their target student populations? What is their vision of society? What ideas do they have about how to achieve a better society? What assumptions do they make about learning? It is important for you, the reader, to be clear about your own beliefs so that you can achieve what you are attempting.

In Chapter 7, after sharing what we have learned about each of the other approaches, we explain the one we advocate. As objective as we tried to be in writing the first six chapters, we know that what people say and how they see the world are shaped by their ideology, background, and vision of the world. Our

students want to know which approach we favor, and our readers probably will as well. Also, we know that the colleagues and students with whom we work are thoughtful people who are not easily persuaded, and most are capable of making up their own minds.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

We have found two different uses for *Making Choices for Multicultural Education*. Some people read it to gain an overview of the history and thinking behind multicultural education. Such readers often read the book quickly, pausing to reflect mainly on differences among the approaches. This text may be used in a course that includes one or two other books on issues related to multicultural education, providing students with a comprehensive overview of the field.

A second way to use the book is to spend time examining how to use each approach to multicultural education in the classroom. The companion text, *Turning on Learning* (published by John Wiley & Sons), can be very helpful and was intended to be used with this one. It is organized according to the same chapter plan as this text, but it provides examples of lesson plans using each approach. When using the books together, a student or teacher can read, for example, the theory behind the "Single-Group Studies" approach in Chapter 4 of *Making Choices*, then examine several lesson plans that illustrate the same approach in Chapter 4 of *Turning on Learning*. In addition to lesson plans, each chapter of *Turning on Learning* contains one or two action research activities, such as a textbook analysis instrument and a stereotyping quiz.

A teacher educator can structure an entire course around *Making Choices for Multicultural Education*. The book can be used alone, or it can be supplemented with other readings or texts. For example, you could spend several weeks in the semester examining various teaching strategies that help improve the achievement of low-income students and/or students of color, using Chapter 2 as a base and supplementing it with material about bilingual education or culture and cognitive style. Similarly, you could pair Chapter 6 ("Multicultural Social Justice Education") with readings on critical pedagogy and antiracist education.

We believe that *Making Choices for Multicultural Education: Five Approaches to Race, Class, and Gender* makes a vital contribution to the fields of multicultural education, gender studies, inclusive education, and critical teaching at an important time in the development of these concepts. Enjoy the fruit of our labor, and if you are inclined, please let us know what you think, for we enjoyed and learned from your comments regarding the previous editions, and we know that your thoughts will continue to help us to grow.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to the wide audiences that gave our first five editions of *Making Choices for Multicultural Education* a warm reception, making this sixth edition possible. This edition reflects events and our own growth, but it is largely similar

to the earlier editions. Readers of earlier editions generally affirmed for us the validity of the ideas we developed; some also offered us critiques, compliments, and suggestions.

We would like to thank the students in our courses at the University of Wisconsin–Parkside, California State University Monterey Bay, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison in which we have used this book, for their helpful feedback. Their questions, reactions, and even difficulties with portions of the text helped us to make this edition stronger. Sincere appreciation is extended to Lisa Loutzenheiser for her excellent ideas about gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues. Super thanks go to Anthony Brown, Keffrelyn Brown, Peggy Morrison, and Kim Wieczorek for library research—accessing more recent resources—and insightful comments and contributions to the overall process. Great appreciation is extended to Kristen Buras for her illuminating ideas, patience, scholarship, and excellence throughout this revision, and much gratitude is offered to Jennifer Austin for the many ways she helped.

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Brief Contents

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Illusions of Progress: Business as Usual

1. What is your very own definition of multicultural education?
2. When you hear the term "business and usual" what are you thoughts in relation to school policy and practices?
3. Who or what is at fault when students don't succeed in school?
4. To what extent is society fair and just to the different groups that make up society?
5. Why do you think some culturally diverse group do not receive equal opportunity?

Picture the following class: Of its thirty students (fifteen girls and fifteen boys), eighteen are White, five are African American, five are Latino (three Mexican Americans, one Puerto Rican, and one Cuban American), one is Native American, and one is second-generation Asian American. Two of the African American students, two Latino students, and three White students come from families that live below the poverty line, while another three White students are from upper-income homes. About three-quarters are from homes that identify as Christian; one is Jewish; and the remaining are from homes that are either nonreligious or members of another religion such as Islam or Buddhism. These distinctions are not readily visible, however, because most of the students are wearing jeans and cotton shirts or T-shirts. Nevertheless, a glance at home addresses and at the free-lunch roster indicates the students' socioeconomic status.

    The students' families vary widely: Only four students come from families in which the father but not the mother works outside the home, six are from single-parent families (two of which live below the poverty line), and both parents of the remaining twenty students hold or have recently held jobs at least part time. Most of the students grew up speaking English, but three of the Latino students speak Spanish at home and one White student speaks French at home. The students' academic skills vary widely: Two spend part of the day in a class for children with learning

disabilities, another spends part of the day in a program for special needs students, one is in a program for gifted students, and one is in a speech therapy program.

How does a teacher teach such a wide variety of students? What sort of curriculum should be taught? Should all students be taught the same curriculum? What role do standards and annual exams play? What teaching strategies are used? How are students grouped for instruction, or are they grouped at all? What kind of seating arrangement is used?

You may find conflicting images forming in your head. Of these images, one may depict how you believe a teacher should teach these students, another may depict how you have seen a teacher whose class you observed teach these students, and yet another may depict how most teachers really do teach them.

We based our hypothetical class on statistics describing the composition of public schools in the United States as we near the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century (Hardy, 2003; Orfield & Lee, 2005; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2004a; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005; World Christian Encyclopedia, 2001). Actually, student composition varies widely across the country, even within the same city or the same school. But given the diversity of U.S. students, schools, and classrooms, the same questions persist. How do teachers actually teach their students, and how might students be taught better?

This book addresses these central questions. We recognize, however, that schools do not exist in a vacuum but are closely connected to the society they serve and increasingly by the influences of globalization. Therefore, when considering what kind of education would best serve the increasingly diverse U.S. student population, we need to consider the nature of the society in which schools exist, including the social, political, and economic influences that come with the globalization. This chapter will first discuss briefly the nature of equity and diversity in society in the 2000s in relation to race, language, culture, sexuality, gender, social class, and disability. Then it will synthesize recent research to demonstrate how teachers actually teach America's diverse student population and how education reform efforts are influencing teaching efforts. Finally, it will provide the framework used in subsequent chapters to address alternative approaches to teaching.

SOCIETY TODAY

It would seem that in some cases racism, sexism, and bias against people with disabilities may no longer be serious societal problems. Increasingly, White women and African American men and women are being elected mayors of large cities; an African American is the Democratic presidential candidate; Latino men and women are rising in the political structure; a Latino, Bill Richardson, is the governor of New Mexico; many Native Americans own businesses, and an increasing number are becoming involved in business enterprise development. In 2007, eighty seven women serve in the U. S. Congress: sixteen women in the Senate and seventy women in the House of Representatives. Nine women are

governors and eleven women are lieutenant governors (CAWP, 2007). Latino, Asian American, and Native American political clout is growing, but at a slow pace: In 2007, out of 435 members of the House of Representatives, forty-two (9.6%) are African Americans, twenty-two were Hispanics (5%), and seven were Asian American (1.6%) (Ethic Majority, 2008).

In addition, African Americans have leading roles in television entertainment, and it is becoming rather commonplace to see people of color and both sexes reporting the news or hosting television programs in large urban television markets, and one of the top movie box office attractions is Will Smith. One can think of additional illustrations of progress in the past decade. Women and people of color as astronauts are no longer big news; the U.S. Supreme Court has an active female member and its second African American justice, and the United States has its second African American Secretary of State.

These indications of progress obscure the larger picture, however. In this section, we will offer a statistical portrait of continued patterns of inequality and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, and disability to complicate the depiction of continued progress that many people take for granted. There is considerable evidence that U.S. society is still very stratified on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, and disability. In fact, stratification based on socioeconomic status is a prominent feature of U.S. society, and social policy in the last four decades has had minimal impact on changing it.

Race and Ethnicity

Americans are reminded repeatedly that the population of the United States is rapidly becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. In 2003, the U.S. population was 12.1% African American; 13.9% Latino; 4.3% Asian or Pacific Islander; 0.8% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 76.2% non-Latino White (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2003). Between 2000 and 2003, over 3.6 million immigrants joined the U.S. population. These immigrants came from every part of the world. About a half million came from Europe, 0.2 million from Africa, and 1.2 million from Asia. The largest portion (about 45%) of immigrants, about 1.6 million, came from Latin America and the Caribbean, contributing to a social phenomenon being called "the hispanization of America" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2003).

In addition to the official figures, population experts estimate that there were also approximately 10 million undocumented immigrants in the United States as of 2004. Roughly 60% are believed to have come from Mexico and another 20% from the rest of Latin America, bringing the Latino share of that total to 80%, or 8 million (Passell, 2005). Latino immigrants, most of them young adults in their prime child-bearing years, have birth rates twice as high as those of non-Latinos. Consequently, Latino population growth is driven both by immigration and by increases in the second generation. Historically, the vast majority of Latino immigrants lived in concentrated areas in the traditional Latino states of California, Texas, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Florida, and New Mexico. Although Latino populations continue to grow in these states, since 1980 Latinos have increasingly

dispersed throughout the United States, entering the workforce in a variety of industries, mainly agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and service. About half of the Latino population in 2004 lived in neighborhoods in which they were not the majority, and in "new settlement" states such as Arizona, Nevada, Georgia, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia, Washington, and Massachusetts, where Latino population growth had been 130% from 1990 to 2000. States with an emerging Latino population, such as Nebraska and Kansas, produced smaller absolute numbers (increases of fewer than 200,000 between 1980 and 2000) but very high rates of growth (more than 200%) (Suro & Tafoya, 2004). It is estimated that Latinos will compose about 25% of the U.S. population by 2050.

With increased racial and ethnic diversity comes greater cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. Eck (2002) points out that "The United States is the most religiously diverse nation in the world." Although Christianity is by far the largest religion, increasingly one finds "Islamic centers and mosques, Hindu and Buddhist temples," in addition to Jewish synagogues and more traditional churches. Furthermore, religious diversity is not limited to urban areas but increasingly is found in small towns throughout the United States.

This diversity enlarges the pool of cultural resources existing in the United States, while at the same time engendering misunderstanding and resentment. In addition, the growing racial and ethnic diversity of the United States underscores the urgent need for our nation to come to grips with racism. Whereas European immigrants had been able to blend in with the dominant population after a generation or two, non-Europeans continue to be visibly distinct from Euro-Americans and thus experience racism, a situation that causes disillusionment even among those who came to the United States full of hope and optimism.

Americans often cite improved racial attitudes as a sign of racial progress. According to 2004 Gallup polls, most Americans of all races say that they have close personal friends from other racial groups. Seventy-eight percent of Blacks and 61% of Latinos said that they would prefer to live in racially mixed neighborhoods, while only 57% of Whites agreed. Indeed, perceptions of racial equality in the United States vary significantly depending on the ethnicity of the respondent. The Gallup polls found that, although 61% of Whites are "satisfied with the position of Blacks and other minorities," only 44% of non-Whites are "satisfied." Seventy-seven percent of Whites felt that Blacks had equal job opportunities, while only 41% of Blacks felt that equal opportunities were available to their racial group. Similarly, 86% of Whites perceived that Blacks had equal opportunities for education and housing, while only 51% of Blacks perceived that equal education and housing opportunities were available (Carlson, 2004; Jones, 2004; Mazzuca, 2004).

Although the laws mandate equal opportunities for all, African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans are still distinctly subordinate educationally, economically, and politically. While high school completion for African Americans in 2003 was 80%, only 17% completed a four-year college degree. High school completion rates for Latino students were only 57% as of 2003, and only 11% of Latino students graduated from four-year colleges. For White students, the rates were 85% and 28%, respectively (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the

TABLE 1.1.
Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers, Age 25 and Older (2002)

Education Attained	Four Years High School	1–3 Years College	Bachelor's Degree
White	$28,145	$30,570	$52,470
Black	$22,823	$26,711	$42,285
Latino	$24,163	$26,459	$40,848

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (2004a), Table 215.

Census, 2004a). African Americans and Latinos earn consistently less than their White counterparts with the same level of education. White high school graduates earn a median annual income of $30,700, compared to $25,580 for Blacks and $25,500 for Latinos, a gap of 22%. White professionals with advanced degrees earn a median annual income of $60,320, whereas Blacks with the same educational level earn $51,220, and Hispanics $51,740 (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005a). These disparities extend to teachers. Latino teachers' average income is around $41,000 per year, compared with White teachers' $43,000 income (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2004a). As Table 1.1 shows, education does not pay off equally for members of different racial groups; being White has measurable economic and employment advantages.

People of color continue to experience poverty and unemployment dispro-portionately. Figure 1.1 shows the poverty rate from 1960 to 2002 for persons based on race. The trends it shows continue: In 2004, for example, Whites suffered poverty rates of 8.2%, Latinos, 22.5%, and Blacks, 24.4% (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2004a). Data on Native Americans are not reported as sys-tematically as they are for other groups, but many tribes experience major poverty
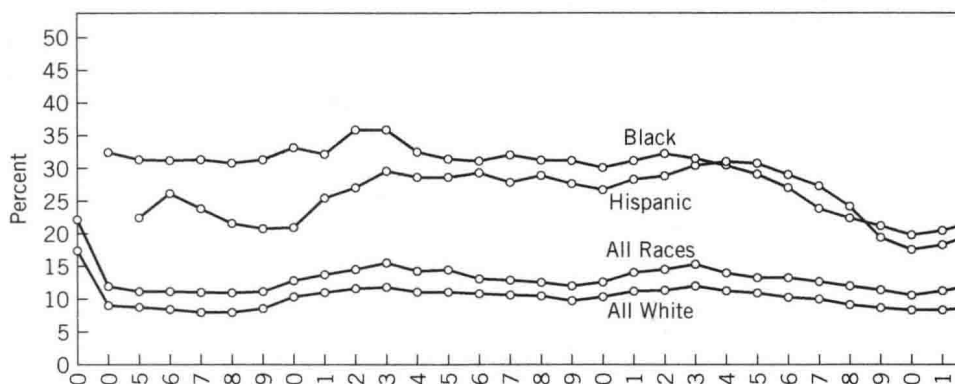

FIGURE 1.1.
U.S. Poverty Rate: Percentage of Persons Below Poverty Line
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (2004a), Table 683.