

## **FIVE APPROACHES TO MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION**

(from, Grant, C.A. & Sleeter, C. E., Making Choices for Multicultural Education 2006)

Key Questions:

How much should the district/school/classroom change/adapt to meet the needs of today's diverse students and families, and how much should students and families have to change/adapt to meet the expectations of districts/schools/classrooms?

Do we view students from an asset-based perspective? Do we believe that each student comes to school with funds of knowledge from family and community, well-developed skills in certain areas (which may or may not match those expected by school), and social/emotional strengths, how do we use those to ensure that they grow and learn everything else that they need to be successful?

How do we take students from exactly where they are (valuing where they are) and move them to where they need to go in a way that builds their sense of efficacy and advocacy?

If our democracy is to continue, how do we prepare students to be active participants who can listen to and learn from others? Who know how to and feel empowered to make change?

	GOAL	TARGET STUDENTS	PRACTICES	STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS
Teaching the Exceptional & Culturally Different	Help particular groups of students fit into the current social structure.	Students in special education, English-language learners, students of color or students from families or neighborhoods	Focuses on a particular group(s) of students, perhaps pulling them out of the classroom or having a specialized teacher come into the classroom for support.	Provides academic help to students who may not be served in the typical classroom.	Deficiency orientation that continues to treat some students as "outsiders" while the mainstream students continue

		<p>characterized by high poverty who are behind their grade level.</p>	<p>Curriculum builds on experiential backgrounds, language, and learning styles of the students to help them “catch up” to their grade -level peers.</p>		<p>to be viewed as the norm. The traditional curriculum &amp; instructional practices do not change to meet the needs of all students. Does not challenge developmental notions of what constitutes appropriate “grade level” performance so students may struggle if the “traditional” classroom does not change.</p>
<p>Human Relations</p>	<p>Promotes unity, tolerance, and acceptance within the existing social structure.</p>	<p>All students</p>	<p>Teaches students about diversity, stereotypes, bullying, differences and similarities in an effort to develop appreciation and understanding of difference. Uses cooperative learning and promotes peace and</p>	<p>It is necessary and important to teach students to get along and appreciate each other. Promotes school as a “no</p>	<p>Most critics view this approach as “the floor,” or a necessary, but insufficient approach. In this approach, there is no attempt made to address the</p>

			harmony.	tolerance” community for bullying, name calling, harassment, violence (physical, psychological, cyber).	complex social structural issues that underpin inequality (e.g, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation). Rarely do teachers using this approach feel comfortable implementing a more explicitly anti-racist, anti- bias curriculum.
Single Group Studies	Promote social structural equality via a focus on the history, culture, and current social issues as they pertain to a particular group.	All Students	Teach in-depth, comprehensive units or courses about the culture of a group (e.g., African- Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, persons with disabilities/disability rights). Units or courses include attention to the history, culture, and current social issues – <u>from the perspectives of that group.</u> Explicitly addresses historical inequities faced by the group that is	Using materials written by member of the group being studied, students learn about the group from their perspective (which may differ, sometimes significantly from that of the traditional	This approach often gets “watered down” into a once-per- year unit rather than a comprehensive, in-depth and on- going study. At the elementary level, it is often seen as “food, festivals, and holidays” rather than an effort to help students gain

			studies. Legal, political and social movements toward equity for the group are included.	textbooks). Teachers should be experts in the group and subject matter Curriculum material should be written by members of the group under study.	knowledge and perspectives that would build understanding. Most teachers need professional development to correctly teach in this model.
Multicultural Education	Promotes social structural equality and cultural pluralism. Built on democratic principles and shared responsibility.	All students	Organizes curriculum in an interdisciplinary manner that includes multiple perspectives and the contributions of diverse people within the US and the world. Varied instructional practices to meet the needs of all students. Shared responsibility and accountability for student success (defined broadly beyond just tests scores). Uses and analyzes data. Explicitly anti – bias, racist, sexist, homophobic. Includes aspects of Human	Engages students and connects them to content and skills by helping them see themselves in the materials, making it relevant to today’s world. By sharing responsibility for student success and addressing “real life” issues, students become	Proponents of earlier models would argue that in trying to do so much, this approach would shortchange the Human Relations or Single Group Studies focus that is needed. Some people believe that by addressing inequality and the “isms” in society, we will create dissension and mistrust. Some believe in teaching

			<p>Relations and Single Group Studies approaches. Addresses the 12 aspects of an equitable district/school/classroom.</p>	<p>engaged and learn to be independent problem solvers. This approach engages parents and families as partners in educating students.</p>	<p>the “classic” or “traditional” curriculum.</p>
<p>Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist</p>	<p>Promotes social structural equality and cultural pluralism.</p>	<p>All students</p>	<p>Organizes content around current social issues. Teaches content and skills through helping students learn how to solve real life problems. Teaches using varying perspectives and experiences, allows students to think critically while comparing/contrasting societal dilemmas. Students are achieving developmentally as they define and solve real-life problems. Standards are met through engagement with student-identified</p>	<p>Programs like <i>Project Citizen</i> have utilized this method for many years. Teaching students how to take action and solve societal problems (large or small) while being guided by a teacher who is able to ensure that expected outcomes are addressed</p>	<p>This approach strikes some people as unrealistic because it seems far removed from the traditional ways in which schools have operated. Not everyone trusts students and teachers enough to let go of prescribed curricula and instructional methods in favor of student-led</p>

			problems in the school or the community. Includes aspects of the previous three models.	leads students to a sense of empowerment and independence.	problem solving.
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