Framing Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice in a Local to Global Context

Cameron White, PhD

> Global educators share certain characteristic instructional strategies: they confront stereotypes and exotica and resist simplification of other cultures and global issues; foster the habit of examining multiple perspectives; teach about power, discrimination, and injustice; and provide cross-cultural experiential learning.
>
> Merry M. Merryfield, 2010

> Education is properly a process of learning to 'read' the world, and therefore, education and activism are one and the same thing.
>
> Paulo Freire, 1970

Diversity, Equity and Social Justice (a working description) - Addressing economic, social, political, environmental, cultural and equity issues in education through a culturally responsive lens in a local to global context connected to ethnicity, race, class, gender, age, ability, and identity leading to critical consciousness and civic engagement.

Education should promote an understanding of diversity and multiple perspectives in local to global contexts.

"Integrating global realities in education meets the needs of an ever-changing, ethnically diverse, increasingly interdependent, international community" (Gay, 2010).

As a result, teaching and learning should focus on being responsive to culture (in the broad conception of the term) and allow multiple perspectives so as to awaken an appreciation and action tied to diversity. Serving as a professor and coordinator of social / international education has enabled me to establish local to global partnerships to enhance equity and diversity through community engagement (projects with museums, community centers, schools), service learning (food bank, Houston Justice Center, schools), study abroad (Latin America, Asia, Europe), student advising (undergraduate and graduate), and program / course development (courses and

projects in social education and international education).

Global / intercultural education should be an exciting, challenging, creative, and engaging endeavor. Improved global / intercultural education will enhance research, faculty and student opportunities, and teaching, language and cultural connections vital for the 21st century. Teaching, research and service must include education for a global perspective so that students might also become responsible "active" citizens of the world (Merryfield and Wilson, 2010; White, 2018). A critical component of education is to promote an understanding of diversity and multiple perspectives at home and abroad: "integrating global realities in education meets the needs of an ever-changing, ethnically diverse, increasingly interdependent, international community" (Gay, 2010).

Accordingly, teaching, research and service must include education for a global perspective so that students might also become responsible "active" citizens of the world (White, 2018). A critical component of education is to promote an understanding of diversity and multiple perspectives at home and abroad. Thus, integrating global realities in education meets the needs of an ever-changing, ethnically diverse, increasingly interdependent, international community. These culturally responsive / multiple perspectives are linked to critical pedagogy and social justice issues in that curriculum and instruction is often been limited to power, privilege, impositions, and non-critical approaches. As stated in the "working description" above, a reimagining tied ethnicity, race, class, gender, age, ability, and identity leading to critical consciousness and civic engagement must be a focus. A critical multiculturalism requires a rethinking of curriculum instruction and ultimately a transformation of teaching, learning, education, and schooling (hooks, 1994).

Transforming social studies and history education focusing on culturally responsive

pedagogy, local to global contexts and linking present to past are important ways to provide connections for all students. Gay (2010) defines culturally responsive teaching as using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and student interest and learning styles to make teaching and learning more learning and effective. According to Ladson-Billings (2010) culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning.

Championing a diverse community is vital for both student and teacher efficacy. Banks and Banks (2004) and Nieto (2014) suggest the following:

1. Acknowledge students' differences as well as their commonalities.

2. Validate student cultural identity in all curriculum and instruction.

3. Provide opportunities to engage in to global connections.

4. Promote equity, respect, rights, and responsibilities among students.

5. Develop an interrelationship between students, families, and the community.

6. Encourage student to become active participants in all aspects of their lives – socially and politically.

7. Focus on life skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, conflict resolution, collaboration, and negotiation.

Empowering and emancipating educators and students requires a redesigning of schooling to demonstrate a truly democratic way of life, to be consistent with the ideals of equity and social justice, to be informed by research that is "educative" (Parker, 2014). According to Goodman, Ullrich and Nana (2012), a "triple consciousness' based on Freire's critical consciousness is much needed for equity and social justice in a teaching and learning context. We must model critical multicultural, social justice education (culturally responsive pedagogy),

work to transform perspectives of all education, society and its stakeholders, and engage in

critical emancipatory research leading to advocacy and activism. Addressing diversity, equity,

and social justice in local to global contexts is much needed in the 21st century.

References

Banks, J. (2015) *Multicultural education…* New York: Wiley.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Continuum Press.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Goodman, Ullrich and Nana (2012). Action research for critical classroom and community change. (pp. 390 – 407). In Steinberg, S. and Cannella, G. (eds.) *Critical qualitative research reader.* New York: Peter Lang.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress.*

Ladsen-Billings, G. (2010). *The dreamkeepers.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing Co.

Merryfield and Wilson, (2010). *Social studies and the world*. Silver Spring, M. D.: National Council for the Social Studies.

Nieto. S. (2006). *Why we teach now.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Parker, W. (2014). Citizenship education in the United States. *In The Handbook of Moral and Character Education.* New York: Routledge. pp. 347 -367.

White, C. (2018). *International education: Local to global connections for the 21st century*. Boston: Brill / Sense Publishers.

Resources

Readings
https://moodle.tiu.edu/pluginfile.php/40294/mod_resource/content/0/G._Gay_article_on_MC_education.pdf

http://www.learner.org/workshops/socialstudies/pdf/session3/3.Multiculturalism.pdf

http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2252/Multicultural-Education.html

http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1065&context=cmc_theses

ME Videos
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzK8Jj5WVo4&list=PLlW9Q-GqbC3BUAWTHsPOjXf_RsTUtf1iw

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5rKgDOs33U

Websites
Rethinking Schools
https://rethinkingschools.org/

Teaching Tolerance
http://www.tolerance.org/

National Association of Multicultural Education
http://nameorg.org/

Critical Multicultural Pavilion
http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/

Wikipedia – Multicultural Education
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multicultural_education

Teach Hub – Multicultural Education
http://www.teachhub.com/multicultural-education-your-classroom

International Journal of Multicultural Education
http://ijme-journal.org/index.php/ijme

Zinn Education project
https://zinnedproject.org/

ME Internet Resource Guides
http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/%7Ejar/Multi.html
https://www.ithaca.edu/wise/multicultural/

Thinkers
James Banks
https://faculty.washington.edu/jbanks/

Sonia Nieto
http://www.sonianieto.com/

Christine Sleeter
http://christinesleeter.org/