

# Chapter 9

## Creating Global Citizens Through Multicultural Education

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### ABSTRACT

*The goals of multicultural education are evolving as the world is increasingly interconnected. Fostering inclusion is no longer sufficient; rather, educators should strive to build a global citizenry who values differences and recognizes their responsibilities to others in the world. A classroom based on global citizenship provides an opportunity for all students, not just diverse students, to become invested in the principles of inclusion, equity, and social justice. Drawing upon fields of intercultural competence, social justice, and global studies, the authors present theories and concrete curricular approaches for teachers and students to understand themselves as cultural beings, reconcile their privileges, value inclusion, foster empathy, and develop a sense of responsibility to promote equity. By cultivating these competencies, educators can move forward in fostering global citizenship, an essential instrument in constructing a coexistence.*

### INTRODUCTION

In response to the civil rights movement of the 1960s, multicultural education developed as a mechanism for teachers to become aware of the backgrounds of marginalized students and promote the history and culture of different ethnic groups. Initial approaches included adding history and culture lessons to the curriculum and offering special activities to showcase ethnic celebrations and traditions. This “touristic approach,” however, merely added to the dominant curriculum without addressing racism and critiquing school structures (May, 1999). Some coursework delved more deeply into ethnic histories and cultures, but such courses were primarily taken by students who were members of the group that was the subject of the course (Banks, 2020).

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As multicultural education evolved, attention focused on ensuring all students, regardless of their gender, social class, ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics, be given equal opportunities to learn. Such work includes raising awareness about differences and disparities, and not simply advocating for adjustments for individual students, but also for changing classrooms, teachers, and school structures (Banks 2020). Multicultural education also grew to examine the interrelation of dimensions such as race, class, and gender (Banks, 2020, Kim, 2011). And at times the “intersectionality” evolves so that *otherness* emerges to the foreground as a dynamic process where individuals engage drawing upon interwoven identities (Bhopal, Kalwant and Preston, John (eds.) 2011).

These efforts have had an important impact, but continuing to foster change in thoughts, hearts, and acts of the dominant or privileged culture is an increasingly essential component. Antiracist education arose as an approach to help students acknowledge racism and white privilege and work to change their thinking and attitudes (Thompson, 2002, Nieto, 2003). Nieto suggests multicultural education move beyond offering culturally responsive education and accurate representation in the curriculum to total school reform based on social justice and equal access to resources.

Banks et al (2004b) agree, drawing from work done by Freire regarding oppression, and challenges educators to move beyond educating the “mind,” but to expand education to the “heart” so students are furnished with not only the skills to succeed, but also the commitment to “social justice and change.” This is especially compelling as the world becomes more interconnected, so that notions of difference are not simply identified or celebrated, but inclusion of difference is fostered and valued. Thus an attention shift from viewing difference along a single axis, is transformed into understanding it as the result of a confluence of multidimensional factors (Crenshaw, 1989)

A move to foster larger, more comprehensive changes, in both individuals and in institutions, can benefit from a larger initiative: global citizenship. Global citizenship includes many concepts of multicultural education, such as dimensions identified by Banks (2004a): increasing understanding of cultural diversity, supporting different processes of knowledge construction, reducing prejudice, promoting equity, and providing an empowering school culture and social structure. Global citizenship using these foundations fosters a sense of responsibility to others in the world and encourages civic engagement to promote dignity and work of others and to dismantle exclusionary structures.

By using multicultural education to build a global citizenry, a broader and perhaps more enticing scope can be achieved. Global citizenship appeals to those who wish to explore and interact with the world, both personally and professionally. With increased mobility, interconnected systems, and direct access to others through social media, everyone needs to be able to interact with people from outside their own group and deal with diversity (Kim, 2011). At the same time, global citizenship should compel individuals to look inward as well as outward, to embed differences as a core value, and to grapple with notions of rights for all and responsibilities towards others.

This necessarily includes all students, not just those who appear to be of a non-dominant or non-privileged culture. In fact, it relies on those with privilege to fully engage in reconstruction efforts, beginning with the dismantlement of intrinsic privilege and terminating with inclusion & equity for all. As such, all students – all peoples – can benefit from intentional learning about global citizenship.

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