

Multicultural Education, Equity, and Social Justice

Syllabus

Course Description

Multicultural education is not just about exploring various cultures in the classroom. It is also about addressing inequities, stereotypes, and the ways they filter down to our teaching practice. Course participants will examine the meaning of their cultural paradigm (and that of their students) and its impact on the learning environment. Educators will investigate issues such as classroom management, assessment, and giftedness through the prism of culture. By building awareness of a variety of perspectives, participants will better understand how to maximize achievement and create a more equitable educational system for all students.

Competencies

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the five-step case analysis process and how it can be used in everyday situations;
- Engage in ongoing self-evaluation and reflection regarding beliefs, best practices, challenges, and current research on diverse learners;
- Summarize and utilize current research pertaining to students with diverse learning needs;
- Explore teaching and learning strategies that encourage critical thinking and problem solving;
- Examine how power, privilege, dominance, and stereotypes inform school culture and traditional teaching and learning models, contributing to achievement gaps;
- Develop a deeper understanding of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression, particularly as they filter into educational settings;
- Reflect on their own values, assumptions, learning styles, and teaching styles, and how these affect the learning environment for all students; and

- Learn to think critically about the potential positive and negative impact of pedagogical and curricular decisions on students, parents, and colleagues.

Materials

All materials are accessed via the [CaseNEX website](#) using the PIN provided and the user name/password you create.

All readings listed can be found by going to *Class Materials*→*Virtual Library*→*Readings (Search)*.

If you do not have the most recent versions of the following software, please download each from the given sites.

- [Windows Media Player](#)
- [RealPlayer](#)
- [Adobe Reader](#)
- [QuickTime](#)

Cases Used

- Borders and Barriers
- Branching Out
- Starr Search
- Urban Unrest
- What Did You Learn In School

Course Schedule

Typical course sessions run from Sunday morning through Saturday at midnight. Specific session dates may be found by clicking on Syllabus on the top menu bar. Course participants should read both the case and assigned readings prior to joining the online discussion. Participation in the discussion should be ongoing throughout each course session. For typical courses, final discussion postings, journals, and workbook assignments are due by Saturday at midnight unless otherwise noted. Please see the News Flash for any alterations of the course schedule posted by your instructor.

Introductory Session

Exploring the CaseNEX Site

Complete these tasks prior to the beginning of Session 1.

Readings

Read the "Course Tutorial" linked from the TUTORIAL menu, paying special attention to the Case-Analysis and Workbook Assignment Rubrics. These rubrics will be used by your instructor throughout the course to evaluate your Journal entries, Discussion responses, and Workbook assignments where appropriate.

Discussion

Post one entry introducing yourself to your classmates. You may choose to describe your professional background and experience, relevant personal information, or why you are taking this course. (100 words or fewer)

Journal

What do you find inspiring and challenging about your work with increasingly diverse student populations? (100 words or fewer)

Note

Use CaseMail to send a note to your instructor stating that you will be taking this course. To do so, click on CaseMail on the top menu bar and then 'Click here to create a new message.' Use the marked link to look up an address. Continue linking down until you see the class list. Click on the instructor's name and then compose your message and hit 'Post Message.'

Session 1

Introduction to Multicultural Education Issues

Case

None this session

Readings

- The Challenge of Defining "Multicultural Education"
<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/initial.html>
- Transforming Myself to Transform My School
http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/papers/edchange_10things.html
- White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack
<http://www.case.edu/president/aaction/UnpackingTheKnapsack.pdf>
- Implicit Association Test
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/>
- Education Equity and Social Justice Awareness Quiz
<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/quiz/quiz.html>

Discussion

Complete the Online Education Equity and Social Justice Awareness Quiz: and at least two association tests. What are some **issues** raised by these tools? What did you learn about your **perspective** – your biases and how they affect your teaching? How do our cultures and expectations shape our perspectives and interactions?

Journal

Describe your **perspective**. Do you consider yourself to be a member of the dominant culture or part of a minority culture? How might these definitions overlap? Consider the ideals from the reading regarding definitions of multicultural education. Respond to any three points, explaining possible **consequences** of your perspective – both positive and negative.

Note

Check your CaseMail (linked from top menu bar) and News Flash (on the right when you login) for notes from your instructor every time you log on to the site.

Workbook

None this session

Session 2

Teaching Multiculturalism

Case

What Did You Learn in School Today?

Readings

- The Challenge of Defining "Multicultural Education"
- Resources For Non-Native Classrooms

Discussion

Revisiting the article "The Challenge of Defining a Single 'Multicultural Education,'" explore how multicultural Susan's unit truly is. What additional **actions** might Susan take to transform herself and thus her classroom? What **issues** are raised and what are the **consequences** of Susan's choice of teaching a unit on Native Americans in November? Using **knowledge** from the readings, what would you propose she do differently to better her students' (and her own) understanding of Native American experiences?

Journal

Reflect on what you do in your classroom to "teach multiculturally" in light of the reading. What are some **issues** that have arisen when you approach lessons with a goal of increasing cultural understanding and sensitivity? What additional **knowledge** do you need to address those issues?

Workbook

None this session

Session 3

Managing Diverse Classrooms

Case

Urban Unrest

Readings

- The Names on the Board
- Blacks are Disciplined at Far Higher Rates than Other Students
- Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline Policies

Discussion

React to the readings for this session. What are the **issues** raised by these articles and what **actions** might you recommend to address those issues?

What do you imagine might be Richard's **perspective** on the related events in John's class? What is your **perspective** on John and Dr. Davis' handling of the situation? What **actions** would you suggest John take to smooth the volatile situation in his classroom? When you respond to each other's postings, consider the **consequences** of their suggestions for John, his students, the school community, and society.

Journal

We've all had students we found particularly difficult to work with. Think about a child whose different culture, ethnicity, social class, or gender may have played a role in your troubled relationship. First, briefly describe this student and a specific incident. Next, explore what occurred from your student's **perspective**. What might be the subtle underlying messages about roles, expectations, and motivation – on both sides? How might these be related to cultural differences? What does completing this exercise suggest for you in your relationship with this student – or others you might have difficulty with in the future? You may not be able to address fully each of these questions within the 250 word limit, so select at least one **issue** to explore as deeply and honestly as possible.

Workbook

None this session

Session 4

Standardization, Accountability, and Multicultural Education

Case

Urban Unrest

Readings

- Testing, Testing
- The Unraveling of No Child Left Behind: How Negotiated Changes Transform the Law
- Listening to Teachers: Classroom Realities and No Child Left Behind
- Critical Perspective: Dr. Daniel Duke on Standardization vs. Customization

Discussion

Apply the concepts presented in this session's readings to the related **issues** presented in the Urban Unrest case: First, explore these case **issues** from the **perspectives** of each of the main characters. Next, respond to each other's postings by offering your own **perspective** and substantiate it with **knowledge** from the readings.

Journal

Focus on the **issues** raised by standardization from a multicultural perspective. Propose one short term and one long term **action** you could take to begin to address those issues. Reflect on potential positive and negative **consequences** of the actions you chose.

Workbook

Proposal to Address Standards

Review your school or district's recent performance on a standardized test or tests. Examine the breakdown of results based on gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and any other criteria your school or district employs. Summarize your findings and identify three key **issues** this review of scores reveals. Detail at least three realistic **actions** to address each of those issues and provide a rationale for your plan. To whom would you address this proposal to ensure implementation of your ideas?

Due by the end of Session 5

Session 5

Multiculturalism and Pedagogy

Case

Borders and Barriers

Readings

- Addressing the Needs of Victimized Students
- Un-Strategies for Multicultural Facilitation: Avoiding Twelve Facilitative Pitfalls

Discussion

Consider the **perspective** of a minority student at Aldebaron High School. Using your **knowledge** from the readings, what might he or she say about their school's climate? How might that student's perspective differ from Stuart's or Miriam's? What are the instructional implications of these differences in perspectives among these three individuals?

Journal

According to the Education Equity and Social Justice Awareness Quiz you took in Session 1, over 50% of students report hearing pejorative comments regarding homosexuality from school staff or faculty. How do you feel when you hear negative comments regarding a student's social class, race, gender, ethnicity, etc.? What **actions** do you take in response? How does your response differ based on your relationship with the person who made the comment? What **issues** does this raise and what are the **consequences** of your response?

Workbook

Proposal to Address Standards assignment due by the end of this session

Session 6

Giftedness and Multicultural Education

Case

Starr Search

Readings

- Underachievement Among Gifted Minority Students: Problems and Promises
- GT-Minority Identification
- Equity and Opportunity: Profoundly Multicultural Questions
- Critical Perspective: Debbie Drown on Gifted and Talented Programs

Discussion

What do you imagine is the impact of each of Terrell's teacher's **perspective** on how he performs in class? From your **perspective** as an educator, in which ways should behavior be included as a criterion for admission into special programs?

Journal

How do educators shape access to gifted and talented programs? What can we do to overcome inherent bias in who receives special services? Include reflections on ELL, minority, and socio-economically disadvantaged students. Propose **actions** for addressing these **issues**.

Workbook

Representation of Diversity in Gifted Programs

Review your school and/or district's gifted program guidelines and policies. Create a chart in which you compare students identified to their overall representation in your school or district by gender, race, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and any other relevant factors. What did you find? What **actions** do your findings suggest for individual teachers, gifted specialists, school/district administrators, students, and families? Draft a letter you could send to your principal or school board suggesting a response to the **issues** raised by who is – and is not – receiving services in your school or district's gifted and talented programs. Include realistic actions that may be taken by you, your colleagues, and administrators.

Due by the end of this session

Session 7

Curriculum Transformation

Case

Branching Out

Readings

- Curriculum Transformation: 'Understanding Curriculum Transformation: A Multicultural Q & A'
- Steps toward Multicultural Curriculum Transformation
- Multicultural Pavilion (Teacher's Corner)

Discussion

Reflect on the ways social class, culture, and world political events affect dynamics among characters in the case. How might these **perspectives** and patterns be positively addressed by educators?

Journal

Based on the "Steps toward Multicultural Curriculum Transformation," in which stage do you consider yourself to be? What **knowledge** do you need and what concrete **actions** might you take to move yourself further along? Describe at least three actions in detail in your response, and include the short and long-term **consequences** for you and your students.

Workbook

Authentic Case Analysis

Use the 5-Step Method to reflect upon a situation in your school related to multicultural education, equity, and social justice. Describe the situation in one or two paragraphs. Address each of the 5-Steps in turn, referring to the Course Tutorial and the Case-Analysis Rubric to guide your thinking. Include ideas from course readings in your analysis.

Due by the end of Session 8

Session 8

Meeting the Needs of Diverse Student Learning Populations

Case

Branching Out

Readings

- Critical Multicultural Education and the Media
- Multicultural Pavilion (Awareness Activities)

Discussion

Multicultural Education is not just about exploring various cultures. It is also about addressing inequities, stereotypes, and the ways they filter down to our teaching practice. React to the above statement, based on your own experiences as a student and educator and **knowledge** from the readings and this course as you respond to your classmates.

Journal

The U.S. is often viewed as a meritocracy -- a place where everyone has an equal shot and success is based on effort and aptitude. According to your experiences as a teacher and student, does this ring true in schools? Discuss actions you might take to develop your educational practice so it supports the realization of a meritocracy in your classroom.

Workbook

Authentic Case Analysis assignment due by the end of this session