

Chapter 1

Multicultural Education

Overview

The tremendous cultural, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic diversity in schools today calls for multicultural education programs that reflect understanding and respect for children's and adolescents' differences. The multicultural education movement has particular relevance for the new century due to the continuing influx of people into the United States and because of the enlightened and more humane perspective that diversity enriches, rather than weakens, a nation. This chapter examines the fundamentals and principles of multicultural education and considers the various aspects that make programs successful.

Key Terms

multicultural education

Brown v. Topeka Board of Education

ethnic studies

multicultural skills

social justice

Essay Questions

1. Examine how you and your co-workers can improve or change your views on the cultural beliefs/ideas of others in order to broaden your own understandings and the ways in which such understandings will translate to all whom you teach and work with on a daily basis.
2. If a group of parents came to you, as an educator, and stated that they did not want your trying to change their children's attitudes/beliefs about a culturally different group in the classroom, how would you respond? Explain.
3. Discuss the concept of "social justice". What implications does it have for teachers and learners, white and non-white?
4. Discuss some of the misconceptions and sources of resistance pertaining to multicultural education. How can these misconceptions be dispelled?
5. Discuss how educators can help reduce the effects of racism. How can beliefs/attitudes be changed in a more positive direction? Think about your own beliefs/biases and how have they changed in recent years. What seems to be most effective in reducing your own prejudices?

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Sustaining integrity and dignity for students and teachers is a basic foundation for an effective multicultural education program. Which of the following enhance such a program?
 - a. skills in analysis and critical thinking
 - b. curricular materials which are similar for all learners
 - c. materials designed to improve self-concept, create and maintain interest
 - d. all of the above
 - e. a and c only

2. **Multicultural education is both a concept and a targeted process designed to:**
 - a. teach that all learners share essentially the same cultural background
 - b. teach learners to recognize, accept, and appreciate differences in culture, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, religion, special needs, and gender
 - c. create a curriculum that denies cultural differences
 - d. increase racial tension to promote change
 - e. lessen concern over Multicultural-Education-Week
3. **Which of the following forces contributed to the outgrowth of the multicultural education movement?**
 - a. mass immigrations to the U.S.
 - b. critical analysis of school textbooks
 - c. the coming of age of the Civil Rights Movement
 - d. positive perspective of the assumptions underlying the deficiency orientation
 - e. all of the above
4. **In preparation for a multicultural education program, educators should develop multicultural skills that include the following three attributes:**
 - a. attitudes, skills, and empathy
 - b. skills, knowledge, and foreign language proficiency
 - c. attitudes, knowledge, and skills
 - d. knowledge, language skills, and attitudes
 - e. empathy, knowledge, and social justice ideals
5. **Some of the characteristics of social justice include:**
 - a. educators transform the school culture through policies and practices
 - b. educators deemphasize inclusion
 - c. educators view social justice as both a process and a goal
 - d. all of the above
 - e. a and c only
6. **The effective multicultural educator possesses which of the following attributes?**
 - a. appropriate recognition and responses to learners' strengths and weaknesses
 - b. positive attitudes and values
 - c. an understanding of the different cultures of learners
 - d. all of the above
 - e. a and b only
7. **When planning multicultural programs, educators should:**
 - a. consider a narrow approach that targets only part of the curriculum
 - b. direct attention to past wrongs of discrimination, but focus on respect and acceptance
 - c. maintain the idea that programs that have previously shown results should not be changed
 - d. address the ethnocentrism of only the learners
 - e. ignore criticism of multicultural programs

8. Teaching about different ethnic and cultural groups may best be described as:
 - a. broad-based teaching
 - b. only a concern for minority learners
 - c. ethnic studies
 - d. homogeneous grouping
 - e. none of the above
9. Many misconceptions exist about multicultural education and include:
 - a. that schools can create unity by assimilation
 - b. such education is an entitlement program
 - c. that it is in opposition to Western tradition
 - d. its goal is to eradicate ethnicity and diversity
 - e. all of the above
10. *Multicultural Education of Children and Adolescents* is based on several assumptions which are a part of its philosophy. Which assumptions speak to the authors' philosophy?
 - a. cultural diversity is an enrichment of society
 - b. a "one-course" approach is sufficient for developing a positive multicultural education program
 - c. our society will increase in growing numbers of diverse groups; therefore, we need to prepare ourselves and especially our learners for this challenging and enriching experience
 - d. multicultural education primarily benefits minority students
 - e. a and c only

True/False Questions

1. Viewing differences, customs, traditions, and beliefs as positive and worthy of celebration will enrich our nation.
2. By displaying on a classroom bulletin board all male students who have achieved high academic scores in math, a teacher will be recognized as an excellent role model in gender equity.
3. Multicultural education should be targeted first toward African Americans.
4. It is best to implement a multicultural education program with a narrow focus on only issues of gender and class.
5. Developing "awareness" will help to ensure acceptance and respect for the differences of others.
6. Children and adolescents should be taught that they have a single cultural identity of which they can feel proud.
7. Because the majority of people finally understand racism and how it affects people, teachers can expect racism to be eliminated in the twenty-first century.
8. Past events of racism will not benefit multicultural education as much as providing a driving force toward changing the future.
9. Repressing one's cultural identity is a stepping-stone for achieving success.
10. Because multicultural education is such a controversial subject, one might wish to delay discussing it with parents.

Answer Key

1.e; 2.b; 3.e; 4.c; 5.e; 6.d; 7.b; 8.c; 9.e; 10.e

1.T; 2.F; 3.F; 4.F; 5.F; 6.F; 7.F; 8.T; 9.F; 10.F