

How do effective teachers think about and respond to diversity? How do you think about it? How will you respond?  
Focus on Diversity

## Outline

### Questions, Questions, Questions

- Is the world better off if we are more alike or more different?
- Is the country better off if we are more alike or more different?
- Is my community better off if we are more alike or more different?
- Is my classroom better off if the students are more alike or more different?
- Am I better off if I am more like others or more different?

??? Do you have a positive attitude toward diversity's benefits? – “to take advantage of the potential that diversity offers, you need to establish a general classroom climate that encourages young people to see diversity in your class (and in our society) as a positive characteristic.”

??? **Do you believe that** America is, and should be, a Mosaic not a Melting Pot

## **I. Multicultural Education definition ~ “education that promotes educational equity for all learners”**

A. Establish a Culturally Responsive Environment – 1) openness and sensitivity to others experiences, values, tastes; 2) alternative texts & readings; 3) discussion formats that are accepting not rejecting; 4) acknowledge legitimacy of cultural heritages of different groups; 5) foster ethnic and cultural pride

B. Gain Accurate Cultural Information (not stereotypical information) – don’t over generalize (all boys are like this, all African Americans are like that, etc). See the class first as individuals . . . who also are from a particular culture, are of a specific gender, etc

C. Create a Bridge Between the two “worlds” – when teachers and students experience cultural disconnect learning stops; to counter this you should become familiar with the worldview that each student brings to class and show students they can be “loyal” to both views from the home and views at schools

## **II. Historically school developed mostly negative attitudes toward minority-group learners. Many teachers operated under the belief that minority students did not succeed in school because they lacked something – these are called deficit theories.**

A. Genetic deficit thinking – example

- o the supposition was that that racial minorities and women lacked the necessary intellectual tools to be successful in school by virtue of their gene pool

- o the idea led to early tracking systems that branched into vocational programs (e.g., secretaries, teachers, nurses)

B. Cultural deficit thinking - example

- o the supposition was that children from the lower social classes lacked an intellectually stimulating home environment

- o the idea first led to Kindergarten and later was a founding idea of Head Start

C. Communications deficit – example

- o the supposition was that non-standard language patterns learned at home and in the community inhibited school performance

- o the idea led to the correcting of English as spoken by students who came from homes of “less educated” parents

- o and, of course, it led to the insistence that one must learn English in order to learn

### **III. Segregation and Desegregation; Its Influences on Learners**

A. De jure school segregation ~ Legal School Segregation (segregation by law) ~ For many years, a school district could operate separate public schools for blacks and whites. Studies have continually shown that legal segregation places minorities (African Americans) at a disadvantage 1) less money was spent on texts and materials 2) the least experienced teachers worked in segregated schools 3) the school buildings were poorly maintained. Most telling was the psychological perceptions communicated by children that they were less worthy than members of the dominant classes. The 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* established a legal guideline that led to the dismantling of segregated school systems.

B. De facto school segregation ~ (segregation in fact) caused by housing patterns. To deal with the housing pattern situation, many schools engaged in busing. The 1974 Supreme Court case *Milliken v. Bradley* barred busing between school districts for the purpose of achieving racial balance. We still have within-Individual-School Segregation caused by scheduling patterns, remedial class drawing heavily from minority groups, college prep courses drawing more heavily from the majority students.

C. Achievement differences ~ If academic expectations in classes to which certain groups of learners have been assigned are not high, it should be no surprise when these groups do poorly in school and on achievement tests. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) raises concerns about differential achievement levels although there is some progress as well. But in general we see some student groups as at risk. Examples: 1) economically poor students do less well on achievement tests than economically advantaged students 2) economically poor students are more likely to drop out. 3) Similar patterns emerge when comparing minority groups to whites; 4) female students' achievement in mathematics and science lags behind males.

#### **IV. Providing Good, Unbiased, Fair Teachers –**

**There can be little doubt that the central ingredient in improving the education of diverse students is a good teacher. However, current school conditions and practices may result in “the learners who need good teachers the most may be the very ones most likely not to get them” . . . These conditions and practices include:**

1. The best teachers are not always attracted by the working conditions in poorer schools.
2. The best teachers (the most senior) often prefer to teach only the best students . . . new teachers are often assigned to the classes no one else wants.
3. The state continues to issue emergency teaching certificates – most used by urban and rural schools.

#### **General Characteristics of Good, Unbiased, Fair Teachers (characteristics for consideration for you as you develop as an effective classroom teacher)**

1. Commit to idea “All children can learn and achieve”
2. Modify grouping practices – get away from the traditional reading groups of high, middle, and low (Eagles, Robins, Crows); create groups of gender and racial mixes
3. Accommodate learning-style differences – allow individuals to approach content in different ways (by the way, individuals may change their learning style as the mature)
4. Become aware of your own perspectives – don’t assume that your basic views on “how the world is” the only one or the most accurate
5. Avoid favoritism in the classroom or expectations based on culture or gender (girls can’t do math)
6. Seek out cultural, ethnic, and gender equity materials: World Wide Web; School Libraries; Community Libraries; Ohio Net; Museums; Parks and Nature Trails; Parents, Community Volunteers, Businesspeople