
Implications of Findings to Curriculum and Teaching in Multicultural America

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Introduction

America has been racially diverse with so many people came from different shores, not only from Europe but also Africa and Asia since very beginning on the Virginia shore, and this reality is increasingly becoming visible and ubiquitous. This emerging demographic diversity has raised fundamental questions about America's identity and culture.

In 1990's, the importance of a culturally diverse education is emphasized as ever before. People began to aware that every student needs to know much more about the origins and history of the particular cultures which, as Americans, we will encounter during our lives. Moreover, many educators stress, multiculturalism has an intellectual purpose. By allowing us to see events from the viewpoints of different groups, a multicultural curriculum enables us to reach toward a more comprehensive understanding of American history. What is fueling this debate over our national identity and the content of our curriculum is America's intensifying racial crisis. One of the lessons of the Los Angeles explosion is the recognition of the fact that Americans are a multiracial society and that

race can no longer be defined in the binary terms of white and black. Americans everywhere are anxiously asking how had they got to this point. Certainly one crucial way is for our society's various ethnic groups to develop a greater understanding of each other.

While all of America's many groups cannot be covered in one book, the English immigrant and their descendants require attention, for they possessed inordinate power to define American culture and make public policy. What men like John Winthrop, Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson thought as well as did mattered greatly to all Americans and was consequential for everyone. African Americans have been the central minority throughout the country's history. They were initially brought here on a slave ship in 1619 and the transformation of Africans into slaves is the story of the "hidden" origins of slavery. Since the Civil War and emancipation, race has continued to be largely defined in relation to African Americans—segregation, civil rights, the underclass, and affirmative action. Their struggle has been a constant reminder of America's moral vision as a country committed to the principle of liberty. Asian Americans have been "stranger" coming from a "different shore" for over hundred and fifty years. The Japanese painfully discovered that their accomplishments in America did not lead to acceptance, for during World War II, they were placed in internment camps. Today, Asian Americans represent the fastest-growing ethnic group. Chicanos represent the largest group among the Hispanic population. They currently represent the largest minority group in the Southwest, where they have been visibly transforming culture and society. The Irish history has been tied to America's past from the very beginning. Ireland represented the earliest English frontier: the conquest of Ireland occurred before the colonization

of America, and the Irish were the first group that English called “savages”. During the nineteenth century, the Irish were victims of British colonialism. While the Chinese fled from the revages of the Opium Wars, the Irish were pushed from their homeland by “English tyranny”. Here they became construction workers and factory operatives as well as the “maids” of America. Representing a Catholic group seeking to settle in a fiercely Protestant society, the Irish immigrants were targets of American natives hostility. For Jews, America represented the Promised Land. This vision led Jews to struggle not only for themselves but also for other oppressed groups, especially blacks. They stood shoulder to shoulder with blacks in the Civil Rights Movement. Today Jews are considered a highly successful “ethnic” group. Moreover, it is certain that America’s diversity was tied to America’s most serious crisis: the Civil War was fought over a racial issue—slavery. The struggle and sacrifices of the War for Independence had enabled Americans to create a new nation out of thirteen separate colonies. Furthermore, people struggled for democracy through World War II—the war for democracy as a principle as well as a process to protect the rights of racial minorities.

When one studies American history, he or she realize that the immigrants were American history. While together they help to explain general patterns in American society, each has contributed to the making of the nation. By looking at all the ethnic groups from a multicultural perspective, we can comparatively analyze their experiences in order to develop an understanding of their differences and similarities. The object of this paper is to see Americans reflected in a mirror called history. Whatever happens, it is certain that much of American future will be influenced by which “mirror” Americans choose to see themselves. By

sharing all the immigrants' stories, author see Americans in a different mirror.

Analysis

In American history, author chose the post World War era to analyze today's American society and education. According to Takaki the importance of World War II was that it was a struggle for democracy as a principle as well as a process to protect the rights of racial minorities. But he also says that democracy in America had failed Japanese American soldiers: their own government had unjustly interned 110,000 Japanese American living on the West Coast. However, many young Japanese Americans were determined to create a better future for themselves and they believed that the only way to accomplish this was to serve in the American armed forces. They had gone to war to fight racism and they proved that they were truly Americans. For Chinese Americans the World War II was the most important historic event of their times. For the first time Chinese were accepted by Americans as being friends because at that time, Chinese and Americans were fighting against the Japanese and the Germans and the Nazis. Indians also served in the Army. As Indian and white soldiers fought together against a common enemy, many of them came to know one another. Although they had been scorned as the enemy during the frontier wars, they supported the war. Mexican Americans and Chicanos too, believed they were entitled to equality and respect. Through military sacrifice, they felt they had earned their right to full citizenship. Similarly, African Americans hoped that World War II would lead to an improvement of their status. The war was challenging Americans of all

racism to come together in the fight for a “double victory” against fascism abroad and racism at home. But the way for black people was not an easy one. The defense of democracy abroad stirred demands for racial justice at home; with peace came new challenges against discrimination and inequality. As the result of their effort, in 1954, in the *Brown V. Board of education* decision, the United States Supreme Court declared that segregated schools were unconstitutional. World War II was the transition to the Civil Rights Revolution. The Civil Rights Revolution, however, was unable to correct the structural economic foundations of racial inequality. While the laws and court orders prohibited discrimination, they failed to abolish poverty among blacks. What is worse, unemployment rose fast in the 1960s. The things were almost the same for other minority people, too.

The author observes that in America each ethnic group has its own residential area and each area shows the living conditions of each ethnic group. Towns like Bronx and White Plains are untidy and poor. There are many ethnic minority people in such poor towns while there are very few ethnic minorities in some fancy towns like Scarsdale and Rye. According to an article in “The Star Ledger”, more than 20% of people in New York City are from the families which have incomes below poverty levels. 33% of those people are blacks, 30% are hispanic, 15% are Asians and 12% are whites. (Star Ledger, Oct. 7. 1997). In fact many ethnic minority students are not successful in school. (California State Department of Education p. 37) Parents complain that their children are receiving poor grades. Many students feel alienated and unmotivated. Teachers often find it difficult to stimulate ethnic minority pupils. From the information, it can be said that ethnic minorities are “truly disadvantaged” in this society.

Today, education is highly valued for its own sake. It is also a way

to increase socio-economic mobility and to prepare students for meeting the demands of society. In the time when the economy was based largely on agricultural production, there was always a place for those individuals who had not completed their education. However we are beginning to recognize more and more that as our society moves further into the information era, low educational attainment may be more handicapping than ever before. (California State Department of Education p.42) That is, it may have more relevance for ethnic minority group members who, on the whole, have a lower rate of educational attainment than whites. With less education, ethnic minority students are becoming “disadvantaged” in a new and possibly even more profound way. The final outcome of this new “disadvantage” may be an even greater income differential between the various ethnic minority groups and their white counterparts.

Implications of Findings to Curriculum and Teaching

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

I) What is cooperative learning?

Based on the previous research, it can be said that there are some fundamental problems in American education caused by poverty, prejudice among ethnic minorities. Coming to the united States, ethnic minority children suffer in their public schools because their English proficiencies are very limited. It is evident that if they made very good friends with English speaking children they will pick up English words rapidly, but they tend to get together and play with the children of the same ethnic group. It seems so sure that cooperative

learning curriculum will be very helpful that my children will be able to study enjoyably and make friends of other ethnic students.

Cooperative learning, the structuring of classrooms so that students work together in small cooperative team holds the potential to provide educational outcomes far more positive than presently provided—especially for minority students. Cooperative learning addresses the three major deficiencies of our present educational system. 1) failure to hold and educate minority students; 2) failure to successfully create positive race relations among students; and 3) failure to socialize students toward prosocial values and behaviors such as respect and care for others, and knowledge of when and how to cooperate and help. Cooperative learning methods directly addresses these problems.

II) Cooperative Learning Methods

There exist a number of cooperative learning methods. One feature that distinguishes all cooperative learning methods from traditional or whole-class instructional formats is the division of the class into small teams whose members are positively interdependent. Positive interdependence among teammates is created by task and reward structures, which make the achievement of any team member contribute to the rewards of all. In such situations, students hope and work for the achievement of their teammates. Here is a list of three distinct types of cooperative learning methods. (California State Department of education, p.242)

Peer Tutoring

Teamwork in the peer tutoring methods often consists of teammates drilling each other (using flash cards or worksheets) with the aim of bringing each member up to his or her highest possible level of proficiency.

Jigsaw

Each team member is given primary responsibility for a unique portion of the learning unit. Teammates leave their teams to work with the members of other teams who have been assigned the same portion of the learning unit. When the students return to their teams, each team member is dependent on his or her teammates to provide the information on the other portions of the learning unit. Thus, teamwork in the Jigsaw methods consists of team members taking turns teaching their teammates the part of the learning unit they have mastered.

Cooperative Projects

In this approach, students work together to produce a product such as a written paper, mural, or group presentation. Each team member receives a grade based on the success of the group product.

Nowadays, many teachers use Cooperative learning so many times in their classes. For example, an English teacher divides the class into small teams and let them make an English skit based on some fundamental conversation he or she taught. In such occasions children have remarkable ability to organize English play although their English proficiencies are limited. Many children give advice, teach, and enjoy each other when

they make a performance. Moreover, Cooperative learning effects wonderfully students' English ability and their relationship. Indeed, children found each other's good point and accepted them each other. Cooperative learning will bring about positive outcomes in American education too, in a number of domains including ethnic relations, unprejudiced class making and academic achievement.

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