

SPED 620
Education in a Diverse Society
Western Carolina University

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“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”
Mahatma Gandhi

TEXTBOOKS

Cushner, K., McClelland, A., & Safford, P. (2012). *Human diversity in education: An intercultural approach, 7th ed.* New York: McGraw Hill.

King, J. E. (ed.). (2005). *Black education: A transformative research and action agenda for the new century.* Routledge.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Christie, C. (2003). *Language in Jamaica.* Kingston: Arawak Publications. (Electronic version of Chapter 4, Language in Education, on the class on Blackboard)

Ginley, M. & Roman, L. (2010). Who does the accommodating? Institutional transformation to promote learning. In S. Nieto, *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*, 10th anniversary edition. New York: Teachers College Press. (Electronic version on the class on Blackboard)

Perry, O. (2000). *Male underachievement in high school education in Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.* Kingston: Canoe Press. (Electronic version on the class on Blackboard)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND JAMAICAN RELEVANCY

This graduate level course is designed to prepare teachers and administrators to meet the needs of a diverse student population and focus on education through sociological and cultural lenses. There are no prerequisites. The course addresses diversity issues as they apply to Jamaican culture and schools.

COURSE GOAL

Students will develop an understanding of and appreciation of diversity with regard to race, language, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, ethnicity, geographic region, sexual orientation, ability, and age. They will use that knowledge to plan, implement, and evaluate educational programs based on student needs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of the requirements of the class, students will be competent in the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

1. Define the concept of culture.
2. Describe the sources of cultural identity.
3. Perceive schools as social and cultural institutions.
4. Identify the characteristics of their own culture and the way in which these can differ from other cultures.
5. Appreciate the cultural differences of students.
6. Nurture learning-support communities for each child (peers, families, communities).
7. Demonstrate sensitivity for the sexual orientation of individual students.
8. Demonstrate empathy for students with learning problems.
9. Demonstrate sensitivity to the religious differences of students.
10. Select and develop instructional content and strategies responsive to cultural, linguistic, gender, religious, ethnic, regional, class, and ability differences in students.
11. Be reflective about their own pedagogy and philosophy regarding diverse learners.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The mission of the professional education programs at Western Carolina University is to prepare highly effective and ethical graduates that are **inspired** to be lifelong learners, **engaged** in the community, and empowered to become leaders who strive to **transform** the future. Education in a Diverse Society incorporates several of the basic components of the conceptual framework including the following:

- advocating for all people and recognizing and respecting the diversity that exists in the world;
- supporting effective, research-based teaching and learning in today's learning environments;
- nurturing productive, responsive world citizens;
- making a positive impact beyond the classroom.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Diversity is integrated into all aspects of this course. The required readings include chapters on students with disabilities, students who are linguistically and culturally diverse, gifted students, and students at risk for school failure because of poverty, abuse, and other reasons. The professional education unit at Western Carolina University defines diversity broadly in include *exceptionalities, race, ethnicity, culture, religious background, gender, linguistic differences, socioeconomic level, and any of the other ways our society defines human and group differences, including age, geography, sexual orientation and national origin.*

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

The course is a face-to-face course supplemented by the Blackboard 9 learning platform. Students will use the tools within Blackboard including Email Messages, My Grades and the Library. They will also have access to the resources placed on the class in Blackboard. In addition, they will create documents using word processing.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Western Carolina University makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To receive academic accommodations, students must be registered with the Office of Student Support. The letter received from Student Support Services should be presented as documentation to the instructor as early in the class as possible.

CLINICAL OR FIELD EXPERIENCE COMPONENT

Students will attend and participate in an event where they are a minority and write a reflection of the event. They will also visit a store that sells toys and compare the boys' toys and girls' toys and reflect on how children are socialized into the culture at an early age.

ADDITIONAL READING

As students move through their program they should be assembling a reference bibliography. Please include the following titles in your reference list.

Nonfiction:

Cowry, M. (2006). *Black ants and Buddhists: Thinking critically and teaching differently in the primary grades*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Delpit, L. & Dowd, J. K. (eds.) (2002). *The skin that we speak: Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom*. New York: The New Press.

Evans, H. (2001). *Inside Jamaican schools*. Jamaica: University of West Indies Press.

Evans, H. (2006). *Inside Hillview High School: An Ethnography of an Urban Jamaican School*. Kingston, JA: University of West Indies Press.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.

Nieto, S. (2010). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*, 10th anniversary edition. New York: Teachers College Press.

Fiction:

Dawes, N. (2009). *The last enchantment*. Kingston: Caribbean Modern Classics.

Set in Jamaica in the racial politics of the 1950s and 60s, this is the story of a young man trying to find himself in a society divided by class.

Ellis, G. (2005). *For nothing at all*. Oxford, UK: Macmillan Publishers.

Two themes are interwoven in this novel: one shows the bright, innocent lives of young boys; the other the dark, shadowy picture of these same boys in early manhood who have grown apart by crime and politics.

McCauley, D. (2010). *Dog-Heart*. Leeds, UK: Peepal Tree.

The story of a young boy from a Kingston ghetto living in abject poverty and the attempts of a middle class single mother to help him.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism by attending all classes, arriving on time, and staying for the entire class. Class attendance is figured into the participation grade, the rationale being that if you are not in class you are not participating.
- Assigned readings are critical to understanding the course content and are to be done before the class meets. Students are required to actively participate in class discussions and activities. Participation counts in the final grade. Assignments are to be turned in on time. Points will be deducted for late assignments.
- Students must adhere to academic honesty in their work. If plagiarism is evident, the student will receive no credit for the assignment and may receive a failing grade for the course.
- Any student with a documented disability requiring accommodations to complete course requirements should make an appointment with instructor as soon as possible.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ACTIVITIES

Group Project on Regional Diversity

Working in groups, you will prepare presentations to share with the class on the parishes in Jamaica, taking into consideration differences in geographic area, language, race/ ethnicity, religion, and economic conditions, and how these factors influence education in the parish. Presentations should be limited to 15 minutes.

Journal

You will reflect on how each type of diversity (i.e. region, class, race/ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, exceptionality, religion, developmental age) impacts on student learning and how this knowledge informs your teaching. The journal entries will be written in class at the beginning of each class.

Reflection of your Cultural Identity and your Personal Teaching/Learning Philosophy and Their Relationship.

Who we are as persons strongly determines who we are as teachers. Sonia Nieto argued that "becoming a multicultural teacher...means first becoming a multicultural person. Without this transformation of ourselves, any attempts at developing a multicultural perspective [for teaching and learning] will be shallow and superficial (2000, p. 253)." Teachers need to be well into their own multicultural journey before they can guide their students. It's a journey that requires more than knowledge about cultural diversity. It means confronting our own racism and biases, learning to see reality from various cultural perspectives, and challenging inequities in our classrooms and in society. Personal reflections help us look inward and outward in becoming multicultural educators.

You will write your personal reflection or autobiography describing your cultural identities and the impact they have had in shaping who you are as a person and how they relate to your teaching and learning philosophy.

Cultural Minority Activity

You are to participate in an activity where you are a minority member in some major way. The intent of the assignment is that you are significantly different than the majority such as a different race than the majority or a different gender or a different religion at a worship service. The activity should be active rather than passive.

Some examples of activities include volunteering at a homeless shelter or shelter for abused women, volunteering to work with children with exceptionalities or older people in a nursing home, attending a different religious or spiritual celebration (another Christian service does not count if you are a Christian yourself), attending an event where another language is spoken, or attending an event focusing on gay/lesbian/transgender issues. If you are not sure about an activity, please discuss it with the instructor.

The activity or event should be interactive and should last between 1-3 hours. After attending the event, write a 2-3 page (double spaced) reflection and include the following:

- Short description of the activity (name of the event, where and when it occurred, activities that occurred, length of time spent at the event) and your interaction with the other participants.
- Your emotional reaction to the event. For example, did you feel uncomfortable? Were you included or excluded? If you felt included, what made you feel comfortable and included? If you felt excluded, what could have been done to make you feel included?
- How did participation in this event raise your awareness about the need to include all learners? What did you learn from your participation in the event that you can use in your teaching or supervision of teachers? Describe the lessons you learned that may affect how you include diverse learners in your classroom and/or school.

Gender Activity

Pay a visit to a store of your choice that sells toys. Browse the aisles and make a note of different forms of gender bias. If you have young children, this would be a fun and informational activity to do with them. The following items are some of the things that you should observe (Hoffman, 2005):

- How are the aisles labeled? How do you know where the boys' and girls' sections are?
- Which sections are larger?
- What types of toys are in each section? List examples of toys.
- What colors are used?
- What type of lettering is used? Jagged edges or smooth edges? What would this suggest?
- What type of language do you observe on the packaging? Indicate what types of verbs (i.e. "destroy" and "create") are used for boys and for girls?
- Cost?
- How many males and females appear on the box covers? Pick one aisle and count

- How are women portrayed? How are men portrayed?
- What races/ethnicities are represented?
- What do the toys promote? Violence, communication, friendship, competition, learning, global knowledge, parenting skills?
- What careers are associated with the toys?
- Are there any toys that portray children or individuals with disabilities?

Your product should be your conclusions of the role that toys play in creating and promoting gender stereotyping. Include concrete examples. Be creative with this assignment! It does not have to be a written report. Think about a product that would appeal to different learning styles. You can also bring in samples and/or pictures to share with the class.

Activity Matrix

You will complete an activity matrix of activities based on the Ford-Harris matrix. The matrix crosses Bloom's Revised Taxonomy with Banks Levels of Integration of multicultural content into the curriculum. Documents describing Bloom's Revised Taxonomy and Banks Levels of Integration can be found in the Activity Matrix folder on Blackboard. Also in the folder is a blank matrix that you can use for the assignment as well as examples of matrices from students in past classes. You are encouraged to collaborate with a classmate on this project.

Evaluation and Grading

Participation: Participation includes attendance, reading the documents and class discussions. Any assignment not included below is included in the participation grade.	100 points
Group Project on Regional Diversity	50 points
Journal Entries: 8 entries-10 points each	80 points
Personal Essay	50 points
Gender Activity	50 points
Cultural Minority Activity/Event	70 points
Activity Matrix	100 points
TOTAL	500 points

A = 450 points or greater (90% or greater)

B = 400-449 points (80-89%)

C = 350-399 points (70-79%)

F = less than 350 (less than 70%)

Tentative Class Schedule

Date

Reading Assignments

5/08/13

Introductions and course overview
Chapter 3 in *Human Diversity in Education* and Part II in *Black Education*

- 5/09/13 Chapter 7 in *Human Diversity in Education* and Part III in *Black Education*
- 5/12/13 Chapter 6 in *Human Diversity in Education* and Part IV in *Black Education*
- 5/13/13 Chapter 13 in *Human Diversity in Education*.
- 5/14/13 Group presentations on regional diversity
- 5/15/13 Complete group presentations
- 5/16/13 Chapter 8 in *Human Diversity in Education* and Chapter 4 in *Language in Jamaica*
- 5/19/13 Chapter 9 in *Human Diversity in Education* and Chapter 12 in *Black Education*
Personal essay due.
- 5/20/13 Chapter 10 in *Human Diversity in Education*.
Gender activity due.
- 5/21/13 Be prepared to discuss *Male Underachievement in High School Education in Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines*.
- 5/22/13 Chapter 11 in *Human Diversity in Education*
- 5/23/13 Labor Day Holiday
- 5/26/13 Chapter 12 in *Human Diversity in Education*
Cultural Minority activity reaction paper due.
- 5/27/13 Part I in *Black Education*
- 5/28/13 Part VII in *Black Education*
- 5/29/13 Part VIII in *Black Education* and the Ginley and Roman chapter, Who Does the Accommodating? in *The Light in Their Eyes*
Activity matrices due.