LRC 640 – Social Justice and Multicultural Education

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Multicultural Education and the Internet
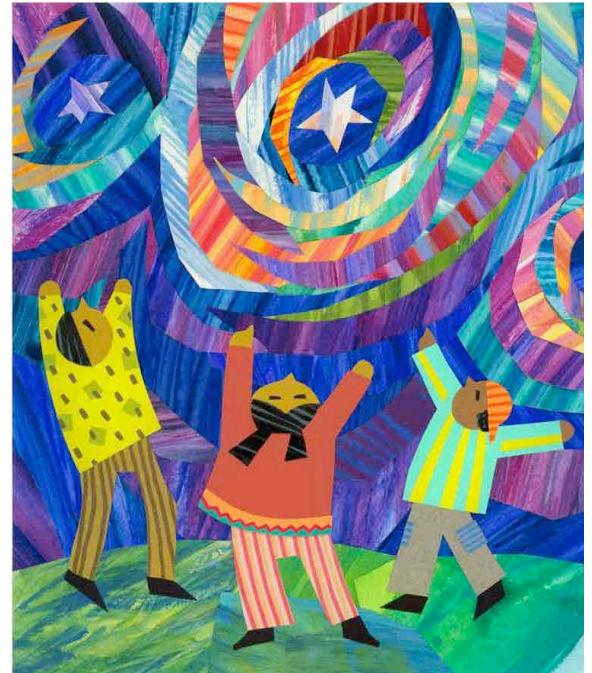
Multicultural Education

- An approach to change education by understanding, questioning and removing inequities in schools

- Focus on the ideas of freedom, justice, equality, equity and human dignity

- Values cultural differences and affirms pluralism while challenging all forms of discrimination

Multicultural Education

Major agenda of Multicultural Education is to effect social change!

The change involves:
- Self
- Schools
- Society

Multicultural Pedagogy

- Student centered
- Draws on student
  - experiences
  - knowledge
- Creates social awareness

- Learning is:
  - active
  - Engaging
  - Interactive learning
- Thinking is:
  - Critical
  - Creative

Multicultural Education and Technology

Technologies are emerging in schools with more reliance on computers and the Internet, however there has been little consideration for the potential impact upon effective and equitable teaching and learning practices.

Multicultural Approach

We may have computers in every classroom, but we don't have teachers in every classroom who know how to use them.

Do students (so called Digital Natives) really know how to use computers?

Multicultural Approach

- There is a chasm between technology and effective teaching practices

- Question to be asked:
  - What is the most effective way to teach this lesson and how does technology fit into that schema?

Multicultural Approach

- Technologies need to be understood evaluated in the greater context of educational and societal framework before they are employed.

- Research and curriculum is peer reviewed before being used in the classroom.
  - Should material from the Internet stand up to the same critical examination?

Multicultural Approach

- Big Picture Question:
  - Does every individual who enters a public classroom have the opportunity to achieve to his or her fullest potential?
    - Regardless of:
      - Race
      - Ethnicity
      - Gender or Sexual Orientation
      - Religion or Politics
      - Socioeconomic status
      - Language
      - Disability

Intersections with the Internet

The Digital Divide

What is the Digital Divide?

- Inequalities in gaining access to computers and the Internet based on social or cultural identifiers (Gorski, 2002)

Multicultural Education and the Digital Divide

Shift from:
Equality Orientation
to
Equity Orientation
by considering the broader more contextualized scope of education and society.

Multicultural Education and the Digital Divide

Consider 7 factors to consider in making this paradigm shift from equality to equity:

- Be critical of digital inequities in the broad scope of the educational setting
- Look to support and encourage, not just gain physical access
- Look to be fair and equal with Internet content and experiences
- Exam who is creating Internet content and how it is being used for instruction

Multicultural Education and the Digital Divide

Consider 7 factors to consider in making this paradigm shift from equality to equity:

- Examine the sociopolitical and socioeconomic motivations for technology in the classroom
- Expose capitalist propaganda about the Internet being available to "everyone"
- Realize that providing more technology will not decrease the digital divide

Five Dimensions of the Digital Divide

- Race
- Gender
- Class
- Language
- Disability

Five Dimensions of the Digital Divide

- Race
  - Physical access
  - Educational access
  - Lack of encouragement and support

Five Dimensions of the Digital Divide

- Gender
  - Lack of encouragement and support
  - Non-hostile and affirming Internet content and software
  - Welcoming and safe cyber culture

Five Dimensions of the Digital Divide

- Class
  - Physical access
  - Progressive learning environments
  - Relevant Internet content

Five Dimensions of the Digital Divide

- Language
  - First language web content
  - Culturally relevant online resources

Five Dimensions of the Digital Divide

- Disabilities
  - Physical access
  - Affordable assistive technologies
  - Non-discriminatory and support information technology culture

Digital Divide Summary

- Gaps still exist
  - Equity
  - Social Justice
  - Cycles of Oppression

- It must be addressed on several levels:
  - Sociohistorical
  - Sociopolitical
  - Sociocultural

Digital Divide Summary

- Adding technology in the classroom is simply not the solution

- There needs to be a transformation of attitudes and expectations about technology in regard to race, gender, class, language and disability

Digital Divide – Ideas for System Change

- Equitable software, computers and Internet content and effective teacher training
- Encouragement and support for technology related fields of study
- Resources for adaptive and assistive technologies (universal design)
- Access and training to culturally diverse pedagogy, websites and software
- Constant monitoring and updating

Digital Divide – Ideas for Teachers

- Reflect upon the use of technology in the classroom
  - Does the use of technology provide the best learning experience for the students?
  - Do I encourage all students to pursue careers in technology ?
  - Do I assign homework where students have equitable to the technology?
  - Do I engage my students in critical discussions about the digital divide and the role of technology in our society?