LEADERSHIP LETTERS

Multicultural Education for Democratic Living in a Pluralistic Society

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Introduction

Three essential concepts of democracy are embedded within the major concerns of multicultural education. These are equality, social justice, and interdependence. These principles suggest that (1) people from different ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds have the right to be treated fairly in schools and society; (2) the contributions of diverse ethnic groups and individuals need to be known and respected; and (3) the lives of individuals and groups are interwoven—they are nourished and flourish because of people helping each other. Put simply, the creation of U.S. society and culture resulted from the contributions of a wide variety of ethnically and racially diverse individuals and groups. Their future development is as dependent on the richness and vitality of diversity as their past has been. Consequently, multicultural education is an essential component of preparation for democratic citizenship.

In order for school programs and practices to meet this mandate, they must represent and respond to all the people who comprise the United States. Since these peoples are ethnically, culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse, educational programs and practices must be likewise. This is the only way to ensure the best learning opportunities and outcomes for the greatest number of students (Pai, 1990; Gay, 2000). Multicultural education conjoins principles of democracy with high-quality

pedagogy to teach the knowledge and skills needed for living in an ethnically and culturally pluralistic society; for combating racism and other forms of social injustice; and for improving the academic achievement of all students in all subjects. These general relationships between multicultural and democratic education are developed in greater detail in the remainder of this essay.

Parallel Missions

Democracy is a moral code, a political system, and a way of living. It is a social contract of the people, by the

people, and for the people. Education is instrumental to its creation, survival, and well being. In the United States the democratic ideal was conceived in struggle and born out of change. In the early years of the nation's existence, Thomas Jefferson noted that democracy requires an educated citizenry. Benjamin Barber (1992) has elaborated on this idea in more contemporary times. He proposes:

> the fundamental task for education in a democracy is the apprenticeship of liberty—learning to be free . . . . The literacy required to live in civic society, the competence to participate in democratic communities, the ability to think critically and act deliberately in a pluralistic world, the empathy that permits us to hear and thus accommodate others, all involve skills that must be acquired. Excellence is the product of teaching and is liberty's measure. There is no excellence without freedom (p. 4).

Montagu and Matson (1979), as well as John Dewey (1916), agree that the achievement of democracy requires community among people. Dewey described this need as "a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (p. 87). Ideas associated with democracy, such as "[f]raternity, liberty, and equality isolated from communal life are hopeless abstractions" (Dewey in Hickman and Alexander 1998, p. 295). Montagu and Matson predict that building genuine community (and thus democracy) in the United States will come

> hard for a people to whom "success" has meant merely their own individual victory in a competitive struggle for room at the top. And it comes especially hard when the necessary means to the completion of the democratic experiment involves a substantial element of self-restraint (p. 189).

The democratic social contract and the agencies it generates are supposed to represent the interests and serve the needs of their creators. These ideas are well established in such documents as the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States. These policy statements also grant permission for their provisions to be renegotiated if they are violated, or fail to continue to viably serve the needs of the people. If a revision acceptable to the greater number of the "cosigners" to the social contracts cannot be accomplished, then new ones can be created. This is why laws are made, modified, and repealed.

Some of the programs and practices that have long been in use in schools are not effective for many African, Native, Latino, and Asian American students, especially if they are poor and live in urban centers. Poor European Americans do not fare well in schools either. Even when students from these groups do well academically, they may have negative physical and ethnic self-concepts, poor social and interpersonal skills, and are culturally isolated or alienated. Others still treat them in prejudicial and derogatory ways. Significant changes are needed in school curricula, instruction, policy, administration, and assessment to correct these flaws.

> **Educational programs and processes need to be revised to make them more inclusive of the cultures, experiences, perspectives, and contributions of all ethnic groups which comprise the United States.**

Multicultural education is a viable alternative for directing these change. It is both a symbol and an evocation of democratic principles within the context of schooling. In effect, it says that too many students are not best served by the way schooling (the "social contract of education") is traditionally conceived and practiced. Educational programs and processes need to be revised to make them more inclusive of the cultures, experiences, perspectives, and contributions of all ethnic groups which comprise the United States. Consequently,

in design and function multicultural education is situated well within the core ideals of democracy. It evokes for educationally disenfranchised groups their *rights of citizenship* to protest, resist, and change actions that violate the democratic imperatives of political, cultural, and social representation, relevance, participation, and justice. Multicultural education embodies for ethnically diverse students Barber's (1992) notions that there are fundamental linkages among education, democracy, community, liberty, and empowerment.

Democracy in its fullest meanings and manifestations is still more of an ideal than a reality for many people. Some conflicts and tensions are inherent in its continuing development. The same is the case with multicultural education. As Bickmore (1993) explains, "pluralistic democracy in particular relies on conflict as a mechanism of change" (p. 341), and "No other concept captures so well the difficulty (and beauty) of democracy in a pluralistic and rapidly changing society" (p. 343). Barber (1992) challenges the assumption that there is only one monolithic and Eurocentric account of U.S. history, culture, and identity. Instead, the "American story" has been multicultural and contentious from the very beginning:

> Long before [Latinos] and Asian Americans began to vie with Native Americans and African Americans for a suitable place and space in the American story, similar arguments were being waged between English and Dutch, Puritans and freethinkers, Protestants and Catholics, farmers and manufacturers, owners and workers, slaveholders and abolitionists, Federalists and anti-federalists, "natives" . . . and immigrants, . . . urban dwellers and rustics, Unitarians and pluralists, progressives and conservatives, and countless other combative factions. Each posed the same hard questions: What does it mean to be an American? Which Americans are we talking about? Whose history is it? To whom does that historical, nearly mystic "we the people" really refer? (Barber 1992, p. 23).

Without some conflict and the changes it generates society is stagnant, unproductive, unimaginative, uncreative! This is most certainly true as the United States tires to craft a genuine democratic society out of its increasingly ethnically, culturally, and socially diverse populations and experiences.

Multicultural education places yet another filter onto the perennial question of, "What is the U.S., and who deserves credit for its creation?" These troubling dilemmas cause it to be problematic for some conventional mainstream societal and school leaders. Its tenets represent a serious critique of how high status knowledge and versions of "the American story" are usually taught, as well as how political and economic power and privilege are distributed among ethnic, racial, and social groups. Multicultural education demands the elimination of inequities in these various forms of U.S. cultural capital. This can be accomplished by *academically enfranchising* students of color and poverty from non-European origins to the same extent as their white male, European American, and middle-class counterparts. Identical treatment is not implied here. Rather, this enfranchisement requires that students of color receive comparable quality learning opportunities (Barber, 1992; Gay, 1988, 2000; Hilliard 1991/92). Ethnically specific pluralism in curriculum content, classroom instruction, and performance assessment are necessary to achieve this comparability.

Psychologists from Piaget to Maslow, Erickson to Kohlberg, Skinner to Vygotsky have long since recognized the inevitability and viability of some conflict in the cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and identity development of healthy, competent, empowered, and resilient individuals and groups. This idea was once referred to in teaching and learning as "cognitive dissonance." In a similar vein the "struggles," questions, and possibilities that multicultural education provokes are a natural part of the efforts of U.S. society and its schools to more closely align their practical realities with their philosophical ideals for a diverse citizenry.

Issues germane to multicultural education, such as racism, equity, social justice, cultural alienation, and the redistribution of power, are inherently controversial and contentious. Yet, they are of major significance and should not be avoided or sanitized in teaching students to be democratic citizens and moral human beings.

Over 150 years ago Frederick Douglass (Bobo, Kendall, and Max, 1991) spoke powerfully about the necessity of struggle in the pursuit of personal freedom and social development. He said that all progress made in the quest for human liberty has been born of earnest struggle:

> The conflict has been exciting, agitating, and all absorbing . . . It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle there is no progress. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will. (Bobo, Kendall, and Max, 1991).

This sage's observations still apply today, especially to building democracy and implementing multicultural education.

Bickmore (1993) contends that social conflict and dissent are particularly relevant to education for and about democracy. This is so because conflict and dissent in living and learning (1) recognize the importance of public discourse and the potential for action beyond the realm of private disagreement; (2) facilitate the construction of more inclusive, comprehensive, and accurate portrayals of who makes history and culture; (3) bring multiple viewpoints to bear upon the analysis of social issues; and (4) require strategies that help students to deal openly with and practice skills of conflict resolution.

Educating students for and about ethnic and cultural diversity has many of the same features. It teaches students the causes and characteristics of tensions associated with living among diverse peoples and cultures, the benefits derived from this diversity, and how to engage constructively with it. This education involves students in learning how to be critical thinkers and problem solvers about ethnically specific sociopolitical issues; to challenge all claims of absolute or universal truths; and to be moral agents and social activists committed to making society model the principles of democracy for ethnically diverse people. Multicultural education debunks some of the deeply held notions about the values, rights, and responsibilities of powerful and powerless, marginal and mainstream, majority and minority groups and individuals in society. These goals cannot be accomplished without personal and social struggle because they involve controversy and change. These, then, are definitive attributes of multicultural and democratic education.

Like the quest for democracy, multicultural education leads ultimately to the transformation of society. It desires to create a new knowledge canon, a new "sociocivic center," and a new social order that reflects the inclusion and contributions of all of the ethnically diverse people of the United States. Nowhere in this goal is there any suggestion of ignoring or violating the overarching cultural ethos of the U.S. as embodied in its democratic creed. Instead, multicultural education *extends the principles and boundaries* of democracy to all citizens. It promotes a more inclusive conception of "the people" of, by, and for whom the U.S. and its institutions are created to reflect, serve, promote, protect, and celebrate.

The achievement of democracy and multiculturalism are closely interrelated. Efforts to accomplish one will, of necessity, facilitate the achievement of the other. In the 1700s Thomas Jefferson argued that a democracy requires an educated citizenry for its creation and perpetuation. In reminding the nation of the original conceptions of democracy, Abraham Lincoln pointed out that the U.S. government began by affirming equal rights and equal chances for all citizens. The U.S. Supreme

Court reaffirmed this idea in the infamous 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case. In rendering its decision the Court declared that if democracy were to flourish one racial group of children could not be given an inferior education to another. Instead, all children must be educated equally. These principles do not assume that all individuals who entered into the social contract and educational institutions are already maximally competent in the ways of democracy. They must be taught democratic knowledge, values, and skills so that the weak will grow stronger, the ignorant wiser, and the marginal and underprivileged will become as fully enfranchised as the majority and privileged (Cuomo and Holzer, 1990).

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More recently, Jesse Goodman (1992) has argued that developing values, feelings, ethics, and skills of "community" is the centerpiece of education for participatory democracy. Similarly, Marian Wright Edelman (1992) of the Children's Defense Fund proposes that the U.S. is in "urgent need of a band of moral guerrillas who simply decide to do what appears to be right regardless of immediate consequences" (p. 68). She elaborates further that the U.S. will be ready to compete economically and lead morally in the world community of nations when it realizes that its future is "intertwined with the fate of its poor and nonwhite children as with its privileged and white ones" (p. 93).

To accomplish these ends school programs should teach students how they are connected to the lives of all human beings and other living things on planet Earth.

These should form the centerpiece of the educational process. Overemphasizing individualism and competition (as has often been the case in the past) should be tempered with creating classrooms that are "societies of intimates" where collective identities and shared responsibilities among ethnically, racially, socially, and culturally diverse individuals and groups are the norm (Goodman, 1992). To the extent that these are a central part of the core learning experiences of all children, school will better fulfill its mission of preparing new generations of citizens to ensure the survival and growth of democracy.

Diversity, Democracy, and Education

Education for citizenship in an ethnically and culturally pluralistic society is based upon several major assertions. Some of these assertions are discussed briefly here to further illuminate the relationship between education for diversity and democracy.

To begin with, there is nothing un-American or anti-democratic about multicultural education. Nor is it contradictory to citizenship education and high academic achievement standards. As Roberta Sigel (1991, p. 3) explains, "There is, of course, nothing intrinsically incompatible between democratic practices and multiethnic living." In fact, it is impossible to achieve a true representative democracy in the U.S., or genuine educational equity and excellence without developing multicultural competence.

Multiculturalism represents an inescapable truth about U.S. society and the human family. Personal, ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity is an inherent feature of both. It is a major source of individual and collective strength, vitality, and creativity. Thus, it should be a major feature of any and all efforts to improve the quality of our individual and collective lives through the educational process. These messages are conveyed eloquently through a 2000 Chevrolet advertisement for Black History Month. Speaking about the resilience of African Americans in the face of adversity and their contributions

to the U.S. heritage of diversity, it says, in part:

> Once upon a time in America . . . a proud and strong people graced the shoreline with their arrival, and despite efforts to shackle their dreams, the human spirit would not be contained. They refused limitations and replaced them with genius. For what they had to offer was a treasure that knew no bounds and that treasure was to touch every walk of life. . . . Through simple acts of courage they stood up for all human dignity. And they've cultivated leaders for the next millennium. . . . We recognize that America's greatness is its diversity of people. . . . Let's continue on together and add to the treasure.

Although the genius recognized in this advertisement is African American, similar accolades are due other ethnic groups of color as well. One telling example of this is the dignity, spirit, and resilience of Japanese Americans in the internment experience during World War II. These are vividly displayed in a film of life in the camps set to the tune of haunting music, but without any spoken words. It is adroitly entitled "Something Strong Within" and is produced and disseminated by the National Japanese American Museum of Los Angeles. Carlos Bulosan, the Filipino unionist and author of the 1940s and 1950s, offers another insightful perspective on the plurality embedded within the making of democracy. He reminds us that the U.S. is comprised of people from all walks of and positions in life, including some troublesome ones. Bulosan observes:

> America is not a land of one race or one class of men. We are all American that have toiled and suffered and known oppression and defeat. . . . America is not merely a land or an institution. America is in the hearts of men that died for freedom; it is also in the eyes of men that are building a new world. . . . America . . . [is] a warning to those who would try to falsify the ideals of freemen. America is also the nameless foreigner, the

homeless refugee, the hungry boy begging for a job, the black body dangling on a tree, . . . the illiterate immigrant who is ashamed that the world of books and intellectual opportunities are closed to him. . . . All of us . . . native born or alien, educated or illiterate—We are America! (Bulosan, 1973, p. 189.)

> **Nowhere . . . is there any suggestion of ignoring or violating the overarching cultural ethos of the U.S. as embodied in its democratic creed.**

Education for democracy involves more than merely transmitting past experiences, heritages, contributions, and events to students. An equally important element is teaching the necessity, skills, and commitment for societal change. These competencies are required to prevent the recurrence of past violations of democratic principles (such as racial atrocities, social exclusions, political powerlessness, and economic inequities), some of which are implied in Bulosan's (1973) profile of "America [USA] and Americans."

Because democracy is still a *developing* enterprise it "has to be re-created in the understanding and behavior of each new generation of citizens or it is jeopardized" (Mosher, Kenny, and Garrod, 1994, p. 23). Schools play a crucial role in this recreation by educating *all* students (not just the racially, intellectually, or socially privileged) to be informed and responsible participants in and contributors to society. The fullest possible development of human potential is every child's birthright and the best guarantee of the promotion of the common good. This means that all children should have an "equal opportunity to benefit from programs that demonstrably enhance their cognitive and socio-moral competencies" (Mosher, Kenny, and Garrod, 1994, p. 27). Multicultural education is a pedagogical tool for achieving these goals.

Contrary to the beliefs of some critics multicultural education is not an anti-Western, extremist agenda promoted by a radical fringe or vindictive individuals. Instead, it is a direct outgrowth of the Western cultural tradition. It began in the heyday of the larger Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s (Gay 2000). Included in the missions of multicultural education is strengthening the nation by teaching knowledge of and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, eliminating inequities among ethnic groups, and improving the academic performance of underachieving ethnically diverse students.

Many of the ideas about democracy and education espoused by John Dewey (1916; Hickman and Alexander, 1998) are embedded within multicultural education. He wrote about them in treatises on democracy and education, school and society, the child and the curriculum, and experience and education. Among these ideas are:

• The environments in which children live constantly influence what and who they are as well as what and who they will become. These influences can be constructive or destructive to both societal and individual potentiality.

• Democracy is more of a moral code and way of living than a form of government.

• Creating community is essential to building democracy.

• A democratic community is characterized by consciously shared interests and free social interactions among its varied members.

• A major objective of education is developing individual dignity and self-realization within the context of community. Although personal dignity and fulfillment may be defined in many different ways, the nature of the society in which they are nurtured is crucial to their realization.

• The growth of the individual and society is inextricably related, and democracy is the ideal for the maximal development of both.

• Because psychological, intellectual, sociological, and moral competencies are equally importance in individual and societal development, cognitive skills alone are not sufficient preparation for effective citizenship in a democratic society. Instead, this imperative demands "teaching the whole child."

• All of these ideas have direct implications for incorporating multicultural knowledge, skills, and actions in democratic education.

The personal enfranchisement, sociopolitical competence, and self-determination that multicultural education promotes for marginalized groups are empowering processes. These are expressed behaviorally as increased active participation in collaborative efforts to achieve common causes. Paulo Freire (Bell, Gaventa, and Peters, 1990, p. 145) recognized these relationships and their sociocivic effects in his observation that "[t]he more the people participate in the process of their own education . . . the more . . . [they] participate in the development of their own selves. The more the people become themselves, the better the democracy." Mosher, Kenny, and Garrod (1994) add that all children, regardless of their ethnic, racial, social, and cultural identities, should be given equal access to whatever "cultural capital" exists in society to enhance their individual human resources. It is "[o]nly when schools are committed to a comprehensive and inclusive vision of education for all children that they can be genuine examples of and advocates for democracy" (p. 169).

Schools can fulfill these functions by providing an education that emphasizes critical, liberatory, and transformative knowledge and skills rather than adaptive and conformist ones. Featherstone (1995) elaborates on this point, saying "In a democracy, people should be educated to be powerful, to tell their own stories, to make their own voices heard, and to act together to defend and expand their rights" (p. 14). This kind of learning prepares students to understand how society is constructed, to critique its strengths and weaknesses,

to make themselves a part of it, and, when necessary, to reinvent society anew. Bohn and Sleeter (2000) identify some practices found in instructional materials that will have to be eliminated if this learning is to occur. These include the tendency to avoid dealing with social class, ethnic, and racial differences within the U.S., and to glorify the accomplishments of Western civilization over all others:

> The world view presented is comfortably middle and professional class. Capitalism and consumerism remain dominant themes. The American families pictured and discussed live in comfortable homes with big yards, attend attractive and well-equipped schools, are treated well by society, and appear to enjoy unrestricted access to financial and social success. . . . European conquests are discussed very matter-of-factly, ignoring all ethical questions. Social or cultural critique is nonexistent, even when its absence is nothing less than puzzling (p. 157).

Multicultural education addresses these issues of power, privilege, hegemony, inequities, personal consciousness, critique, and social action at multiple levels (local, regional, national) and in varied domains of human activities (social, cultural, moral, environmental, political, economic). It recognizes that excluding the experiences and contributions of some ethnic, social, and cultural groups from school curriculum and instruction is a form of academic disenfranchisement. The effects can be devastating on both the psychological well-being, ethnic identity, and academic achievement of students. Adrienne Rich (1986) equates them to the psychological disequilibrium that would occur if one looked in a mirror and saw nothing.

To be most effective, multicultural and democratic education must permeate all dimensions of the educational enterprise. In making a case for this kind of education Sigel (1991, p. 7) declares that it "cannot be restricted to, let alone equated with, a course or two on civics or citizenship, or studies in democracy. Such courses . . . [are] but one part of the educational equation. . . . How [the school] comports itself in the classroom, how it deals with controversies and authority relationships, the treatment it accords students, etc. make an equally important and perhaps more lasting contribution to the student's democratic orientation." The same can be said about multicultural education. Regardless of how comprehensive and qualitative the factual information taught about different ethnic, racial, and cultural groups, it alone is not sufficient to adequately prepare students to be effective and responsive citizens in a multicultural society. Developing attitudes, values, ethics, and actions congruent with respecting, promoting, and equalizing cultural diversity are also important.

> **The fullest possible development of human potential is every child's birthright and the best guarantee of the promotion of the common good.**

Intersections

All of the key democratic ideals of U.S. society are embedded within the major tenets of multicultural education. They comprise natural linkages between education for diversity and democracy. Nine of the leading tenets of multicultural education are summarized here to illustrate these interconnections. Related democratic principles are identified in parenthesis.

- Education should respond directly to the needs and interests of all segments of the student population. Many of these are particular to different ethnic, cultural, and social groups. Therefore, all dimensions of the educational enterprise in the U.S. need to be multiculturalized in order to equalize educational opportunities for all students *(Enfranchisement; Representation; Participation).*

- All students should have access to high-quality, high-status education. "Access" has several critical dimensions, including availability of resources; quality and relevance of instructional content and learning activities to the lives of diverse students; the absence of intrusive obstacles in the form of negative teacher attitudes, expectations, and actions; equity of educational opportunities for ethnically and culturally diverse student populations; and more accurate exposures of the "multitude of voices" which were and continue to be actively involved in the creation of the United States. As principle, *voice* is analogous to the democratic ideals of freedom of speech, self-presentation, and the right of self-determination. As content, it is accepting the experiences and contributions of different ethnic, cultural, racial, and gender groups as legitimate and worthy knowledge to be included in the school curricula of all students *(Enfranchisement; Social Justice; Equality; Human Dignity).*

> **A democratic community is characterized by consciously shared interests and free social interactions among its varied members.**

- All students have the right to accurate knowledge about the history, life, and culture of their country. An essential feature of this knowledge is its multicultural nature. The creation, development, operations, and potentialities of the United States are shaped by the presence and influence of many ethnically, racially, gender, and culturally different individuals and groups. Furthermore, when the principle of "majority rule" is applied to teaching about the national culture, that which is taught must be multiethnic, multiracial, and multicultural *(Entitlement; Participation;* e pluribus unum, *interdependence; Equality; Community).*

- The racist, oppressive, and hegemonic practices often imposed upon different marginalized groups of color by the European American majority are violations of those terms of the "social contract" having to do with protecting the rights of the minority. Therefore, students should be taught skills to combat racism, sexism, and all other forms of oppression, and to reconstruct all dimensions of society to achieve a more equitable distribution of social, political, economic, and educational resources and opportunities among ethnically diverse groups *(Equality; Justice; Enfranchisement; Empowerment).*

- All students in all grade levels, subject areas, and school settings should learn about the cultures and contributions of the various ethnic groups in the U.S. This means that multicultural education is both about and for everyone, not just groups marginalized because of race, class, ethnicity, gender, language, or national origins. Access to this knowledge is a right of citizenship *(Inclusion; Community; Participation; Enfranchisement).*

- Education in the United States is a *public creation, a public mandate,* and a *public service.* "The public" is increasingly racially, ethnically, socially, and culturally pluralistic. For schools to fulfill their most fundamental functions, their instructional programs and practices must be multiculturalized. To the extent that this is not done some segments of "the public" are systematically denied appropriate education for citizenship rights and responsibilities, as well as opportunities for high-quality academic achievement *(Social Justice; Equality; Entitlement; Enfranchisement; Citizenship).*

- Multicultural education can better prepare all students to reach higher levels of academic excellence and civic competence than some of the pedagogical practices previously employed. Educational excellence in the form of content relevance, personal confidence, and academic achievement are facilitated by the affirmation of ethnic and cultural diversity. Simply put, students perform better academically when they see their heritages in curricular materials, and learning

activities are related to their lived experiences. Civic competence is enhanced by students understanding how the lives and destinies of diverse groups and individuals are interrelated; developing an egalitarian ethic and a moral intolerance for all forms of injustice and inequality; and acquiring sociopolitical action skills for working toward the betterment of society for everyone's benefit (e pluribus unum; *Community; Interdependence; Equality; Justice; Morality).*

> **Education should respond directly to the needs and interests of all segments of the student population.**

- Multicultural education provides a critical voice, a civic conscience, and a reflective screen for assessing the appropriateness of conventional approaches to democratic education for ethnically diverse students in a culturally pluralistic society. The critique it provides is a springboard for the initiation of social and educational reform. This reform requires cross-racial and interethnic group collaboration and collective action *(Truth/ Honesty/ Integrity; Empowerment; Community; Participation).*

- Multicultural education assumes that diversity is an "inalienable right" and a major source of individual and societal regeneration that deserves to be honored, understood, and promoted. The potential of diversity for human enrichment should not be neglected or compromised in educational and sociopolitical processes. To do so places undue limitations on the potentialities of diverse individuals. These actions restrict the creative horizons of society. Conversely, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity in individuals and societies is a source of vitality, strength, renewal, and progress. This is particularly true of the United States, where ethnic diversity is one of its most distinguishing

characteristics. *(Empowerment; Enfranchisement; Change; Social Justice).*

Conclusion

Neither genuine educational excellence nor social and political democracy can be achieved without dealing conscientiously with ethnic and cultural diversity. Multicultural education and democratic education can be advanced simultaneously if several reform techniques are pursued rigorously. These include: (1) making all dimensions of the educational enterprise (curriculum, instruction, climate, assessment, personnel, policy) culturally pluralistic; (2) creating and disseminating multicultural prototypes of effective citizenship in a pluralistic democratic society; (3) adopting and enforcing standards of citizenship which include knowledge, values, and skills for functioning in a culturally pluralistic society; (4) teaching a multicultural code of ethics; (5) holding students and teachers accountable for knowing, respecting, and promoting cultural diversity; and (6) developing exemplary models of multicultural curriculum and instruction appropriate for the subjects taught at different levels of schooling. If the complementary relationship between multicultural and democratic education is clearly understood and taught, students will be better prepared to assume their citizenship rights, roles, and responsibilities in a culturally pluralistic society, and to perform well academically in schools.

These results will constitute what Benjamin Barber (1992) calls "an aristocracy of everyone." By this he means ethnically diverse citizens having the knowledge, desire, opportunity, competence, and conscience to (1) govern their common lives according to standards of community, caring, freedom, equality, justice, morality, and human dignity; and (2) to live their lives free from unnecessary inhibiting constraints imposed by others.

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