

Ethnic Diversity, National Unity and Multicultural Education in China*

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The purpose of this paper is to review ethnic diversity, national unity and multicultural education in China with graduate students in a multicultural education course and pose some questions for discussion. China is a rapidly developing multiethnic country facing several challenges, including pollution, growing income inequality and low political participation of ordinary citizens. These can threaten social stability. In addition, China must address ethnic conflict, particularly in urban, autonomous and border regions. The Chinese government is advocating national unity education in the school and college curriculum to help address these some of these issues. Multicultural education could provide a framework for addressing social, economic, political and educational inequalities in China. Excerpts from different sources provide information on relevant issues. The instructor could distribute this material to students to read before the lesson, and/or, use his/her own material. Teachers in China and other countries should: (1) avoid teaching a hidden curriculum; (2) understand the characteristics of a culturally assaultive classroom; (3) learn how to prepare a multicultural curriculum; (4) set objectives while using a multicultural education model; (5) involve parents in the education of children; and (6) work on changing their attitudes. Some ideas for teaching multi-culturally are listed in seven Tables.

Keywords: ethnic diversity, national unity, multicultural education, China

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss topical and pedagogical perspectives on ethnic diversity, cultural sustainability, national unity education and multicultural education respectively in the Peoples Republic of China (hereafter referred to as China). Gladney (1995) stated that:

The present borders of China were established by foreign conquest dynasties, first by the Mongols and finally by the Manchus. The modern state has tried to unite its various peoples with transportation and communication networks and an extensive civil service. In recent years, these efforts have continued through the controlled infusion of capitalistic investment and market manipulation. However, these integrative efforts have not produced cultural uniformity. (pp. 92-123)

A Chronology of Chinese Dynasties could be found in Table 1.

There are many definitions of culture. The concept is defined in this context as learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day-to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of

*Some of the content in this paper were excerpted from a Fulbright-Hays 2009 China project report. The material was collected from seminar notes, newspaper, literature reviews, and discussions with academics and teachers in China during a study seminar in four Chinese cities and Hong Kong. The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

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human social interaction (Damen, 1987, p. 367). Culture contains the values, symbols, interpretations and perspectives that distinguish one people from another in modernized societies; it is not material objects and other tangible aspects of human societies (Banks & McGhee, 1989, p. 35). Sustainability can be defined in many contexts. However, it is commonly used in connection with economic, ecological and ethical issues.

Table 1

Chronology of Chinese Dynasties

Xia Dynasty		2070-1600 B.C.	
Shang Dynasty	Western Zhou	1600-1046 B.C.	
Zhou Dynasty	Eastern Zhou	770-256 B.C.	
	Spring and Autumn Period	770-476 B.C.	
	Warring States Period	427-221 B.C.	
Qin Dynasty		221-206 B.C.	
Han Dynasty	Western Han	206 B.C.- 25 A.D.	
	Eastern Han	25-220	
Three Kingdoms	Wei	220-265	
	Shu Han	221-263	
	Wu	222-280	
Western Jin Dynasty		265-317	
Eastern Jin Dynasty		317-420	
Northern and Southern Dynasties	Southern Dynasties	Song	420-479
		Qi	479-502
		Liang	502-557
		Chen	557-589
	Northern Dynasties	Northern Wei	386-534
		Eastern Wei	534-550
		Northern Qi	550-577
		Western Wei	535-556
		Northern Zhou	557-581
Sui Dynasty		581-618	
Tang Dynasty		618-907	
Five Dynasties	Later Liang	907-923	
	Later Tang	923-936	
	Later Jin	936-947	
	Later Han	947-950	
	Later Zhou	951-960	
Song Dynasty	Northern Song	960-1127	
	Southern Song	1127-1279	
Liao Dynasty		907-1125	
Jin Dynasty		1115-1234	
Yuan Dynasty		1206-1368	
Ming Dynasty		1368-1644	
Qing Dynasty		1616-1911	
Republic of China		1912-1949	
People's Republic of China		Founded on October 1, 1949	

Note. Source: *People's Daily*. "Brief chronology of Chinese history".

Cultural sustainability in this context is defined as the process by which different cultural, social, ethnic

and other groups attempt to transmit, maintain and protect their cultures from others that they perceive as implicitly or explicitly hostile or distrustful. The contents will be used as supplementary material in a graduate course titled "Foundations of Multicultural Education". Students are introduced to some contemporary issues in the Peoples Republic of China related to the challenges of maintaining cultural sustainability, solidifying national unity and adapting multicultural education in the process. In addition, the discussion will enable students who are interested in developing a comparative perspective about China to include materials about China in their different disciplines.

One of the basic goals of public schooling is to transmit culture and socialize youth. In addition, public schooling could help promote national unity and economic development. This process may explicitly or implicitly propagate the culture of the dominant group and limit development of minority languages and cultures. Globalization enabled China to develop its own brand of capitalism at a rapid pace. However, economic development accentuated gaps between rural and urban populations and homogeneous and minority groups. China, like other large countries, has experienced bouts of ethnic unrest. Schools and other educational institutions are now required to include teaching about national unity in the curriculum which presents challenges related to curriculum reform, including pedagogical content, teacher education and teacher professional development.

Discussions on cultural sustainability, national unity and multicultural education should introduce graduate students in teacher education to some of the challenges facing China in the context of globalization and political stability.

Cultural Sustainability

The centralized state in the contemporary world is able to reach its citizens very quickly and make them comply with state policies, law and regulations. The Chinese saying, "The sky is high and the emperor is far away" was relevant in the old days when transport and communications were not as advanced as they are today. In modern times, governmental means of coercion are many and highly sophisticated. Anyone thinking about disrupting the public peace should stop and think about the brutal consequences. China has stringent laws against protests and demonstrations. Arrests for "endangering state security" rose from 620 in 2000 to a projected 1,623 in 2008. However, the state also has obligations to extend citizenship rights to all, especially minority and disadvantaged and ethnic populations. The state may be prone to raising suspicions about minority group demands for legitimacy and protection. However, minority culture groups think about group appreciation, acceptance and respect from the majority population as necessary for group cultural sustainability. It is important to focus on how to educate all citizens for cultural sustainability in a globalized world. Bekerman and Kopelowitz (2008) published a groundbreaking book focusing on how to educate for cultural sustainability in different cultural, diaspora, ethnic and minority groups. The book contains chapters discussing aspects of cultural education and sustainability in China. Key points are identified from selected chapters and these key points should provide foci for class discussion questions.

Ling (2008) discussed "Education and Cultural Sustainability for the Minority People in China: Challenges in the Era of Economic Reform and Globalization". She stated that multiculturalism is a potentially effective process that would contribute to China's development and globalization. It could also provide a framework for addressing social, economic, political and educational inequalities. From an educational perspective, it could help teachers to positively nurture the learning experiences of minority Chinese students

and facilitate the provision of minority higher education institutions to use a framework that will develop their global cultural interaction. There are 55 minority groups in China comprising 8.3% of the population or 106.4 million people. Compared to the majority Han population, there is more poverty among minority peoples. There is a connection between cultural education and cultural sustainability. Poverty restricts minority children from reaching their full potential in primary and secondary education.

Wang (2006) continued the discussion with his contribution "Cultural Sustainability: An Ethnographic Case Study of a Mongol High School in China". The research was intended "to evaluate the implementation of China's multicultural educational policy in a Mongol urban high school in Inner Mongolia and to determine participant's perspectives on how to better teach and maintain Mongol culture". The main points made by the author are listed below:

- (1) The central government under Deng Xiao-ping established a new multicultural policy in 1978;
- (2) This approach includes respect for ethnic equality and unity, cultural maintenance, anti-discrimination and regional autonomy;
- (3) Inner Mongolia has fully developed educational systems and the number of schools and students has increased at all levels and in the areas of diversification of education and heritage language development;
- (4) Public education predominates and public school boarding was mandated for ethnic schools under the 1984 Autonomy Law;
- (5) There are contradictions in the broader social context that can lead to policy distortion and ethnic hegemony, especially in curricula contents. For example, instruction given in the Mongol language could be interpreted to promote cultural indoctrination, because it contains mainly Han culture contents;
- (6) The implementation of the multicultural policy should be properly monitored and excessive central control should be relaxed. Ethnic Mongol heroes and role models should be as a socialization tool for Mongol students;
- (7) The anti-discrimination policy is not emphasized in the Mongol High School and anti-racist education persists among both Hans and Mongols;
- (8) Minority students in Inner Mongolia have some cultural rights and freedoms. For example, they have additional education funding, special bursaries and higher admission rating to institutions of higher education in their region;
- (9) Cultural diversity is evident on paper at the local level. However, the level of effective monitoring and implementation leaves much to be desired;
- (10) Han Chinese hegemony predominates curriculum content;
- (11) There is too much central control;
- (12) Low opinions of Mongol culture, held in common by Hans and Mongols insinuate that schools have a hidden curriculum that negatively affects all Mongol students.

Macpherson and Beckett (2008) discussed "The Hidden Curriculum of Assimilation in Modern Chinese Education: Fuelling Indigenous Tibetan and Uyghur Cessation Movements". They provided a theoretical reflection on the hidden curriculum of assimilation in modern secular education through a particular case of the China's educational reforms and their impact on the Tibetan and Uyghur peoples. Some of the issues raised in this discourse are:

- (1) Tibetans and Uyghurs suffer direct or indirect discrimination in China in education, which deprive them of cultural and linguistic continuity;

(2) The curriculum reflects cultural practice. However, centralized curriculum imposed on the Tibetans and Uyghurs poses an assimilationist threat to these peoples;

(3) This type of curriculum excludes local, culturally relevant contents, and uses Mandarin Chinese as the language of instruction;

(4) Unemployment among new graduates is high. Such trends impose an obligation on these peoples to acquiesce to the linguistic and cultural norms of the dominant group;

(5) Tibetans and Uyghurs are also protecting their cultures by participating in outright cessation movements and enhancing local control over culture, education and language.

Education in China

China's educational system is the largest in the world. There are 240 million students and 12 million full-time teachers in 2003. There are four major tiers in the structure—primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, and higher education. The first two tiers provide nine years of compulsory basic education. The great majority of graduates from the common primary school system move on to general junior secondary schools. However, some students go to vocational junior schools. The three years of senior secondary schooling are also divided into academic and vocational tracks. The general senior secondary school prepares students mainly for higher education. Others go to specialized secondary schools, vocational senior secondary schools and skilled worker schools that train mid-level technicians and personnel for specific occupations.

Higher education consists of degree and non-degree programs, mainly four years in duration that train professionals in various areas. Beyond that, there are highly academic masters and doctoral programs. Public examinations are used to screen and select students and move them from one level to the other. There are junior secondary entrance examinations at the local and national levels respectively. Student's scores from these examinations are used to allocate spaces in the senior secondary schools.

Education Reform and National Competitiveness

After the economic reforms of the 1970s, Chinese leaders realized a need to develop the country's human resources through education and professional skill development. Deng, Zhao-ping cautiously reversed Mao Ze-dong's definition of human capital. To Mao, young people should rise up and challenge old and established authority, but they did not need any special educational preparation to do so. For Deng, the development of professional, intellectual and expert knowledge was crucial to the future national development of China. He proposed the concept of using education as a vehicle for developing human capital, together with science and technology. Significant progress has been achieved in large cities and urban areas. However, improvements in the rural areas and the countryside are not as significant.

Poverty and Basic Education

Decentralization has affected developing countries, such as China, in many ways. Responsibility for education is passed on to local authorities sometimes without setting up organizational structures necessary for such transfer. Local authorities may not have the capacity to manage education in efficient ways. Perhaps, the major impact is the heavy constraints placed on areas of poverty. Hannum (2003) discussed issues of poverty and basic education in rural China and how community resources can condition educational inequality. According to Hannum, economic expansion in China significantly affected educational financing in rural areas and placed great constraints on poorer villages without profitable village enterprises. This situation will make it all the more difficult for rural and poorer regions to develop the capacity, resources and personnel needed to

implement a national unity curriculum. Johnson and Chhetri (2002) examined how China modified its educational policies to achieve separate and distinct regional objectives that were linked to ethnic and regional differences. They commented that the educational policies of China often resulted in exclusionary practices. Their case study on Tibet illustrated the dichotomy of Chinese educational policy, how to achieve universal primary education for all students, and at the same time, contain regional ethnic resistance against the government and maintain national unity.

Ethnic Unrest

Riots broke out in Urumqi, the capital of Xingjiang Uyghur autonomous region in northwestern China on July 5, 2009. It was reportedly started as a protest of about 1,000 Uyghurs who were dissatisfied with the central government's handling of the deaths of two Uyghur's who were working in a toy factory in Guangdong Province. Two days later, on July 7, it escalated into fighting between majority Han Chinese and Ugyhurs. Police used tear-gas, water hoses, armored vehicles and roadblocks in an effort to quell the disturbances and a curfew was imposed on urban areas. At least 197 people were reported dead and at least 1,721 wounded. President Hu Jin-tao cut short his participation in the 35th G8 Summit and returned to China to monitor the situation. The Uyghurs trace the origins of the disturbances to an incident involving police brutality on two Uyghur workers in a toy factory in Guangdong Province. The government blamed outside instigators, particularly Rebiya Kadeer president of the World Uyghur Congress. However, she denied the charges.

Teaching National Unity

China Daily reported an editorial that the Chinese Ministry of Education and The State Ethnic Affairs Commission had decided to make national unity compulsory for classroom instruction and college entrance examinations. The commentary further stated that harmony among people of different ethnic identities and cultural backgrounds in China should not be taken for granted. It stressed the significance of harmonious coexistence among Chinese students when they are very young. The Chinese English language newspaper *People's Daily* online also carried an editorial after the Urumqi Riots and commented, thus, that: "As a country of multiple nationalities, the idea of national unity is the basic foundation for the safety of all ethnic people, and it is also the great power that keeps Chinese civilization going on and on".

Challenges to Teaching National Unity

The details on how to teach about national unity are not clear. However, it is suggested that:

China is planning to add the education on ethnic unity into the national teaching program for all primary and high schools as well as vocational middle schools nearly two weeks after the July 5 riot in Xinjiang; ... starting in 2009, provincial level education administrative departments should report about its progress on ethnic unity education every November.

Some challenges to teaching about national unity in China were highlighted in a Chinese English newspaper (*Global Times*, 2009) that:

It is a good sign that the ministry is paying great attention to this project, but implementation of a new curriculum could pose challenges. For example, the lack of adequate teaching facilities particularly in areas of low living standards, such as rural and border regions. It is proposed that online in-service teacher would be used as the primary method of teacher training. Teachers may be unable to translate the new skills learned online into practice because of situational constraints. Therefore, the goal of improving teacher effectiveness may be hard to achieve, unless the programs are modified to take into account the conditions under which most teachers work.

In addition, the mandatory rule that national unity education must comprise a minimum of 15 % of the political curriculum may further burden students who already have more than enough study tasks, as they will have more tests to take. It will eventually push students to resist studying and probably end up as just another official obligation that has lost its meaning. Fundamentally, all Chinese people share similar values and the same sense of morality, whatever their ethnic group or religious beliefs, and this is what has kept the 56 ethnic groups united. Therefore, whatever form education on national unity takes, it should emphasize and promote these shared values.

Nation states are proud to proclaim nationhood and espouse nationality. Definitions of nationalism are many and varied. Classical nationalism assumes the creation and maintenance of a fully sovereign state owned by a given ethno national group (“people” or “nation”) as a primary duty of each member of the group. Nationalism in a wider sense refers to a large social group (smaller than the whole of humankind) that is centrally of moral importance. When there is an ultimate choice to be made, the nation has priority. However, another issue flavors the way in which nations perceive the several min-identities within their populations. That issue is multiculturalism. Nationalism emphasizes identification with the nation-state. However, ethno nationalism focuses on identifying with the racial, ethnic or tribal group. This contemporary world dilemma is relevant to China.

Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education

Multiculturalism is a concept that needs the attention of all groups in a multiracial and multiethnic society, such as China. Multiculturalism is important even within one homogenous or cultural group. The idea is about ending the stigma and endemic devaluation of all peoples, classes and groups (Pai, 1990). We must not perpetuate notions of superiority or inferiority among our school age population. Multiculturalism is about challenging everyone academically, ending segregated programs, valuing differences and recognizing all cultures as significant in the mainstream curriculum. Wang and Phillion (2009) indicated that there was a critical need for multicultural education in China. They contended that a large gap existed between China’s minority policy and practice. They further stated that the provisions in the Constitution of the Peoples’ Republic of China with regard to minority rights are not implemented in the daily lives of minority groups. These researchers asserted that the CCP’s (Chinese Communist Party) control of all institutions in China propagated dominant Han ideologies and reproduced dominant Han culture as ways to maintain national unity. Therefore, multiculturalism in China has its own distinct characteristic, tolerance of minority cultures and languages on the condition that they do not damage national stability and national unity.

Multicultural education contains possibilities for China’s majority Han population and members of the 55 other nationalities to be both conscious and proud of their country and their ethnicity, race, or culture all at the same time. It is difficult to understand the intricacies of multicultural education especially in a country with 5,000 years of recorded history and with a population consisting of 90% Han and 55 nationalities.

Every nation in the world seeks to minimize ethnic rivalry, antagonism and conflict between various groups within its borders. Each country tries to maintain an adherence to the notion that all citizens share common humanity, needs, hopes and fears regardless of ethnicity, race, language or religious beliefs. Multicultural education seeks to facilitate and advance this common human bond rather than the alternate practice of bigotry, stereotyping and ethnocentrism. Gutek (2006) posed some pertinent questions for multicultural and international education, which are translated into statements for discussion as follows:

(1) Self-differentiating and self-determining ethno national cultural groups can coexist peacefully and educationally within a single nation—state’s political and educational structure;

(2) Transmission of cultural heritage can be rendered into plural forms as cultural heritage within the nation—state framework;

(3) The larger nation—state concept that can be reformatted to take precedence and absorb smaller conflicting ethno national groups;

(4) The notion that the new global reality is a world in which mini-states based on ethnicity are replacing large nation states is fallacious. Multicultural education is about processes used to make children from all segments of the population feel that they are welcome in the school environment.

China's 5,000 years of history and culture included contacts with foreigners and foreign culture. However, the country adapted foreign cultural influences rather than assimilated them. The Middle Kingdom was perceived by her inhabitants to be at the center of the earth and surrounded by oceans and barbarians and there was a belief that the country had everything and did not need anything from outsiders. China's history contains both victories and challenges. Her victories included the consistency in which she has held disparate ethnic minority groups and the Han majority together as one. In addition, she has succeeded in feeding its population. China has defied the reasoning that communist ideology and capitalist economic development cannot coexist. Among her challenges is the complexity and intricacy involved in extending the benefits of economic development and equal educational opportunity to children in the countryside. States are usually suspicious of minority group sentiments, particularly when they are confrontational, violent and public. Ethnic unrest is sometimes sensationalized by the media and the state is caricatured as uncompromisingly coercive and imperial. However, states also have a responsibility to protect the citizenship rights of all people.

Some Perspectives on Multiculturalism in China From 500 B.C. to 1949

The following paragraphs contain material suggesting that multiculturalism had some positive significance in a historical context from 500 B.C. to 1949. In the "The Silk Road" (Footnotes, Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1999), it is said that:

Confucianism gained significance and became deeply linked to Han culture during the "Hundred Schools" era 500-300 BC Other religions, such as Buddhism, developed alongside Confucianism and became adapted to Chinese traditions. However, religions, such as Christianity and Islam, did not gain popularity. The Tang dynasty (618-907) was very cosmopolitan. Jews arrived and built synagogues, and the ruling Li family was part Turkish. The Song dynasty was far more resistant to foreign cultural influences. The Yuan was Mongol and their members did not try to turn the Chinese into Mongols and did not show much desire to become Confucians themselves. The last imperial dynasty, the Qing, was from another nomadic group, the Manchus. Unlike the Mongols, however, the Manchus consciously manipulated symbols from different cultures to govern the various peoples within the empire. Under the Qing, for example, the emperor became the patron of Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism, while also observing some purely Confucian rituals, and in fact became far more Confucian over time. During this period, contacts with the West increased significantly, especially with respect to Christian missionaries and British traders... Foreigners who spoke and dressed as Chinese and observed Confucian etiquette were even accepted as Chinese.

China developed a compromise in dealing with the West focusing on the "ti/yong" distinction. Confucianism would be retained as the essence (ti) of Chinese civilization, while adopting Western practical learning (yong). However, these thinkers soon discovered that accepting Western yong depended on adopting Western ti.

Sun Yat-Sen, the first president of republican China, was educated in the West and converted to Christianity, and his ideology of government bore explicit links to Abraham Lincoln's notion of government by the people, of the people, and for the people. However, far from lending credence to multiculturalism in any form, he introduced ethnically based nationalism, arguing that China was weak because foreigners ruled it.

Confucianism lost credibility after the revolution in 1911, as many began to see it as the problem, not the necessary

foundation, of an ethnically defined China. In the subsequent power struggle, many ideologies competed to succeed Confucianism, but few people seemed interested in tolerating diverging points of view.

The Communist regime that took over mainland China in 1948 countenanced no cultural rivals to Chinese Marxism. The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, two critical and vastly destructive epochs of the communist era, were both anti-Western and centralist, opposed to regional and cultural differences. Standardization, most notably of the language, was a crucial part of the program.

Beginning in the 1970s, China began opening to the West as a counterweight to alignment with the Soviet Union. However, this strategic move unleashed broader forces in society. Young Chinese began to absorb Western tastes and ideas; the Quran was published in China for the first time since 1949; minorities demanded autonomy and recognition. Although cultural diversity continues to gain ground, few voices are willing to consider genuine autonomy for minorities. The greatest search seems to be for a formula that will allow China to become strong and wealthy without discarding its unique characteristics— be they Confucian or communist or something else.

China adapted rather than assimilate elements of foreign culture over the centuries. One of the country's earliest connections to foreign cultures was the Silk Road, a 7000-mile route used by Chinese merchants to exchange goods with other merchants in central Asia, northern India, and the Parthian and Roman Empires. It connected the Yellow River Valley to the Mediterranean Sea. It passed through Chinese cities, such as Kansu and Sinkiang and present day countries, such as Iran, Iraq and Syria. The silk trade was not particularly lucrative for the Chinese. However, it helped to increase the number of foreign merchants in China under the Han Dynasty and provided opportunities for Chinese and foreigners to experience different cultures and religions, such as Buddhism and Islam at that time. The existence of the Silk Road indicated that China was not isolated in ancient times but was connected to other Asian civilizations. This interconnection resulted in a symbiotic exchange and adoption of cultures.

The Hidden Curriculum

Legislation alone will not facilitate multicultural education in China. Children are sometimes affected by discrimination when teachers ignore the nuances of the hidden curriculum. This involves paying attention to issues, such as body-language, tone of voice, facial expressions and unconscious actions that contradict positive conversations. Jarolimek and Foster (1989) believed that schools must guard against the delivery of a hidden curriculum that includes some aspects listed in Table 2.

Table 2

The Hidden Curriculum-Unspoken Agendas

Reflects attitudes of administrators and teachers.
Relays expectations and values prized.
Reflects the extent to which schools suit the needs of the child.
Impacts on the informal interactions with other children and on social skills and lifetime human relationships.
Conditions which behaviors gain favor, and which ones do not.
Affirms knowledge gained about teachers' feelings toward social issues, groups and individuals.

Note. Source: Jarolimek & Foster (1989).

The Culturally Assaultive Classroom

Teachers can develop a multicultural approach to teaching by consciously deciding not to run a culturally assaultive classroom in which minority or culturally different children will feel inferior. A culturally assaultive classroom encourages majority children to feel ethnocentrically superior. Such attitudes result in fear and discomfort when they have to deal with people from different cultures. Table 3 highlights elements of a

culturally assaultive classroom, which teachers should try to eliminate.

Table 3

Elements of a Culturally Assaultive Classroom

Discussions of different cultures are simplistic, for example, casting Han culture as superior to Uighur culture.
Minorities are depicted as wearing funny looking clothing and do not practice values that are important to Hans.
Depicting the architecture of Minority group houses as makeshift, without bothering to explain why they lived in such quarters.
Making little effort to understand Minority group cultures by failing to invite speakers from these groups to explain their culture.
Token representations of dolls and toys represent the different racial and ethnic groups in Chinese society.
Teaching about racial and ethnic groups in token units during special times of the year rather than consistently saturating teaching units with the perspectives of members of these groups all year round.

Note. Resource: DeWolf & Clarke (1992).

The Multicultural Curriculum

Curriculum and teaching are indivisible. Teachers must know what they intend to teach and how to implement their lesson plans. P. L. Tiedt and I. M. Tiedt (2005) indicated that multicultural education is more than data, add-ons to the regular content areas or set of skills. In addition, multicultural education is not easily assessed and does not constitute a one-size fitting all approach. The definition of multicultural curriculum could range from linking content to state standards and high stakes testing to more basic approaches including commercial programs, teaching units and classroom materials. In addition, the multicultural curriculum should include developing changes in attitudes, reworking lessons to allow for diverse points of view and balancing large differences among students in background and interests. P. L. Tiedt and I. M. Tiedt (2005) presented the model EEE (esteem/empathy/equity) as the foundation for multicultural education, because they believed that the three elements are central to achieving multicultural goals. They advised that each of these objectives should be considered when dealing with each instructional area. A list of objectives for teaching multiculturally using the EEE model is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Objectives of the EEE Multicultural Education Model

Developing student's identities as individuals of worth so that they can contribute to the class and have motivation to persevere after making mistakes.
Value difference of opinion and understanding how these differences enhance students' ability to make decisions at different times.
Understanding different perspectives and what factors influence one's perspective.
Learning about one's heritage and that of others without stigmatizing others.
Promoting global ways of thinking and understand the interdependence of humanity.
Recognizing and accepting the responsibilities of a citizen in a multicultural society.

Note. Source: P. L. Tiedt & I. M. Tiedt (2005).

Sleeter and Grant (1988) provided some guidelines for developing multicultural curricula, which could be used in conjunction with the EEE model. They advocated among other things, using diverse perspectives, providing historical and contemporary accounts of events and occurrences and eliminating racist and sexist language from materials. Some guidelines for developing multicultural curricula are provided in Table 5.

Involving Parents in their Child's Education

Children will be motivated better when their parents become involved in their education. Minority parents are more likely to be intimidated by a teacher or other school officials than those from dominant societal groups.

This situation could be worse when these parents are from low socio-economic or migrant groups. It is very important to involve parents in the education of their children regardless of their racial, ethnic, or socio-economic status. The Confucian value of “filial piety” should facilitate the willingness of parents to become involved in the education of their children. Chavkin (1989) provided some suggestions for involving parents in their children’s education. These are listed in Table 6.

Table 5

Guidelines for Developing Multicultural Curricula

Including diverse perspectives, experiences and contributions in the subject matter.
Including materials and visual displays that are free of race, gender and disability stereotypes.
Including concepts related to diverse groups, rather than teaching segments of information pertaining to such groups.
Providing historical and contemporary accounts and presenting all groups as active and dynamic.
Permeating all subject areas and all phases of the school day and the curriculum with multicultural information.
Eliminating sexist and racist language from materials and presentations.
Endorsing bilingualism/biculturalism and the reality of a multicultural society.
Reflecting children’s daily lives and experiential backgrounds in your lessons.
Including the community in curricula concepts.
Allowing equal access to the curriculum, e.g., college preparatory courses.

Note. Source: Sleeter & Grant (1988).

Table 6

Parental Involvement and Multicultural Education

Debunking the myth that minority parents do not care about the education of their children.
Involving parents from all socioeconomic groups.
Explaining the functions of the school.
Making parents feel welcome and valued.
Educating parents about their children’s progress (conferencing).
Involving parents in their children’s education (communicate homework assignments, expectations, opportunities for volunteering, etc.).
Research shows that there are strongly positive relationships among parental involvement, school achievement, attendance rates, parent-child communication, improved student attitudes and behavior and parent-community support for schools.

Note. Source: Chavkin (1989).

Teachers’ Attitude in Multicultural Education

Table 7

Suggestions for Teachers’ Attitudinal Change

Developing more democratic attitudes and values.
Developing a multicultural philosophy.
Viewing events and situations from diversely ethnic perspectives and points of view.
Working on understanding the complex and multidimensional nature of ethnicity in Chinese society.
Studying the stages of ethnicity and their curricula implications.
Learning how to function at increasingly higher stages of ethnicity.

Note. Source: Banks (1981).

Teachers must be prepared to change their attitudes to life, teaching and their students and student’s parents in order to be able to teach multiculturally. Many teachers have uncritically internalized the dominant prejudices of their society or culture. Sociologists and anthropologists refer to this as a state of being “culture bound.” Culture boundless includes a tendency to consider ones’ culture, ethnicity, or religion as superior to all

others, failing to study and internalizing the insights of other cultures (improving, thereby, the breadth and depth of one's thinking and failing to see socio-centric thinking as a significant impediment to intellectual development. Banks in 1981 made some suggestions for changing teachers' attitudes and these are listed in Table 7.

Discussion Questions

Cultural-Sustainability

Students will respond to the following questions or statements after reading the relevant section, and/or material provided by the instructor. Students will consult additional text and online sources:

- (1) Discuss the significance of cultural-sustainability to ethnic, minority and "other" groups living in a dominant culture;
- (2) Discuss some of the challenges facing multiethnic societies, such as China to sustain diverse languages and cultures;
- (3) When is it appropriate for governments in multiethnic states to use coercive force against dissident protests and demonstrations?.

Education in China

China is the most populous multiethnic country in the world and has an estimated 240 million students and 12 million full-time teachers (estimate, 2003.) Students will respond to the following questions or statements after reading the relevant section, and/or material provided by the instructor. Students will consult additional text and online sources:

- (1) In what respects has Confucianism influenced Chinese, thought, culture, and education?
- (2) Discuss issues of poverty and basic education in rural China and how community resources can condition educational inequality;
- (3) China is moving toward teaching national unity in schools and institutions of higher education because of the high occurrence of ethnic protest leading to loss of life and damage to property. Is the inclusion of content on national unity in the curriculum the answer to minimizing dissent and protests particularly from ethnic minorities? Give reasons for your answer.

Multicultural Education

Students will respond to the following questions or statements after reading the relevant section, and/or material provided by the instructor. Students will consult additional text and online sources:

- (1) One writer stated that multicultural education is the new world "international reform movement" (Banks, 1988);
- (2) Do you support this statement? Why? If you do not, why?;
- (3) Discuss how China might be able to use some aspects of multicultural education to foster national unity and political stability;
- (4) Recommend some objectives for teachers in China to use when they teach multi-culturally.

Conclusions

This paper was originally written to introduce graduate students enrolled in a multi-cultural education course to issues on ethnic diversity, national unity and multicultural education in China, and to pose some questions for discussion. China is a rapidly developing multiethnic country facing several difficult challenges,

such as pollution and growing income inequality, which in turn threaten social stability. In addition, China must address ethnic conflict, particularly in urban, autonomous and border regions. The Chinese government is advocating national unity education in the school and college curriculum to help address these issues. Multicultural education is a potentially effective process that could provide a framework for addressing social, economic, political and educational inequalities in China. Multi-cultural education could help teachers in China and other multi-ethnic countries to nurture and enrich the learning experiences of all students. The author advised that teachers, including those in China should: (1) avoid teaching a hidden curriculum; (2) understand the characteristics of a culturally assaultive classroom; (3) learn how to prepare a multicultural curriculum; (4) set objectives while using a multicultural education model; (5) involve parents in the education of children; and (6) work on changing their attitudes. Ideas for teaching multi-culturally are listed in seven Tables.

Some of the content in this paper were excerpted from a Fulbright-Hays 2009 China project report. The material was collected from seminar notes, newspaper, literature reviews, and discussions with academics and teachers in China during a study seminar in four Chinese cities and Hong Kong. The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

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