

# Nurturing Cultural Diversity in Higher Education: A Critical Review of Selected Models

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## ABSTRACT

Canadian universities and colleges are becoming increasingly ethnoculturally diverse. Two major social forces have contributed to this change: immigration and increasing enrolment of international students. Minority and international students bring their values, language, culture and educational background to our campuses, to add to and enrich our educational environments. To build an inclusive education, we have the ethical and educational responsibility to embrace such difference and diversity and to integrate it into all aspects of university life, including teaching and learning. However, in our daily encounter with cultural diversity we still confront many challenges, such as the colourblind and the “difference as deficit” perspectives, partially resulting from a lack of knowledge and readiness to approach diversity. The goal of this article is to bridge this gap by examining three selected models commonly used to nurture cultural diversity in higher education: the intercultural education model, the multicultural education model, and the anti-racist education model. It is hoped that this discussion will benefit the university community in Canada as well as in other countries where diversity prevails.

## RÉSUMÉ

Du fait de l'immigration et de l'augmentation du nombre d'étudiantes et d'étudiants internationaux, les universités et collèges du Canada sont de plus en plus diversifiés sur le plan ethnoculturel. Les étudiantes et étudiants issus des minorités ethniques ainsi que d'autres pays apportent avec eux leurs valeurs, langues et cultures, ce qui enrichit d'autant le milieu éducatif. Il est de notre responsabilité à la fois morale et éducative, si nous voulons créer un environnement inclusif, d'intégrer ces différences et cette diversité dans tous les aspects de la vie universitaire, y compris l'enseignement et l'apprentissage. Toutefois, dans nos rencontres quotidiennes avec la diversité culturelle, nous sommes confrontés à plusieurs défis, notamment les modèles dits « aveugles à la couleur » et la perception de « la différence comme déficit ». Ces perspectives résultent en partie d'un manque de connaissances et d'attitudes peu disposées à accueillir la diversité culturelle. Le but de cet article est de répondre à ces défis en examinant trois modèles fréquemment employés pour encourager la diversité culturelle dans l'enseignement supérieur : l'éducation interculturelle, l'éducation multiculturelle et l'éducation anti-raciste. Nous espérons que cette discussion aura des effets positifs pour la communauté universitaire du Canada et d'autres pays marqués par la diversité.

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## INTRODUCTION

Canadian universities and colleges are becoming increasingly ethno-culturally diverse. Two major social forces have contributed to this change: immigration and increasing enrolment of international students. Minority and international students bring their values, language, culture, and educational backgrounds to our campuses which adds to and enriches our educational environments. To build an inclusive campus, we have the ethical and educational responsibility to embrace such diversity and to integrate it into all aspects of university life, including teaching and learning. Despite its potential for contributing to a richer learning environment, in our daily encounters with cultural diversity we still confront many challenges, such as the colour-blind and the "difference as deficit" perspectives (Dei, 1996). Another challenge is the fear of diversity (Palmer, 1998), partially resulting from a lack of knowledge and readiness to approach diversity. The purpose of this article is to critically examine common approaches used to nurture cultural diversity in higher education, particularly for the purpose of enhancing teaching and learning. This will help prepare faculty and staff at Canadian universities, colleges, and individuals to overcome the aforementioned challenges, and in particular those faculty members who work with students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The article is organized into five parts. It begins with a definition of cultural diversity followed by a mapping of the demographics of diversity in higher education in Canada. The third section examines some issues that arise in dealing with cultural diversity, particularly from the perspective of critical pedagogy. In the fourth part, we review three models that are commonly adopted in addressing diversity in teaching and learning in higher education and can be used to derive inclusive teaching strategies. The article ends with a critical evaluation of the models and a discussion of their pedagogical applications.

### DEFINING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

To understand the impact of diversity in the educational setting, it seems necessary first to define some key terms, including culture and cultural diversity. Culture can be defined as a dynamic system of values, beliefs, and behaviours that influence how people experience and respond to the world around them. For many, cultural diversity can be referred to as “distinctions in the lived experiences, and the related perception of and reactions to those experiences that serve to differentiate collective populations from one another” (Marshall, 2002, p. 7). This article argues that in defining cultural diversity we need to go beyond culture and focus on its relational aspect by emphasizing the relationships of interdependence among groups in the context of unequal power and domination (Bannerji, 2000; James, 2000). Although cultural groups share commonalities in perspectives, behaviours, and ways of being in the world, they are rarely homogenous. Within each cultural group, there are differences that affect the way individual members in the group relate to one another and to the group as a whole. Although aspects of culture such as race and ethnicity are more visible, differences within groups such as class and gender intersect and affect other aspects of individual identity and group membership. Members of one cultural group may simultaneously belong to several groups, and these multiple group memberships result in aspects of identity that respond to, conflict with, and contradict each other. Culture, therefore, cannot be viewed as an organizing principle that creates static borders based on race or ethnicity, but as constantly changing, dynamic, and fluid (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004).

Culture and education are inextricably intertwined, and students' perspectives and worldviews influence their experiences in educational environments (Adams, 1992; Gay, 2000; Jones, 2004; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Culture plays a part in shaping the ways in which students learn and communicate, how they relate to other students and instructors, their motivation levels, and their sense of what is worth learning. The degree to which students feel comfortable in the learning environment will depend on the congruence between their cultural background and the dominant culture of the educational institution. Traditional classroom culture can exclude students in many subtle ways through either the content of the curriculum or instructional practices. For example, in a study with South-Asian students in a predominantly white Canadian university, Samuel and Burney (2003) report that their respondents felt

that a perceived Eurocentric emphasis with a penchant towards Anglo-Saxon assumptions and premises made them feel excluded and marginalized in classroom situations. One student noted, "*When examples are used with western connotations, then the minority students are left out and minority students don't understand and find it difficult to pick up*" (p. 103). Here is another example. The history of Canada, Australia and New Zealand is often portrayed in textbooks from a white settler perspective, ignoring the rich indigenous culture that existed prior to the arrival of the settlers. Instructional strategies that are based on values such as competitiveness and maximizing individual achievement may be alienating for students from cultures where group achievement is valued over individual achievement (Morey, 2000). It is important, therefore, that educators "become aware of the ways in which the traditional classroom culture excludes or constrains learning for some students and learn how to create environments that acknowledge the cultural diversity that new students bring" (Adams, 1992, p. 7).

In addition to the responsibility that institutions of higher education have in meeting the needs of diverse students, there is evidence that increased diversity in higher education institutions can benefit students from all backgrounds both from majority as well as from minority groups (Casteneda, 2004). These benefits include an improvement in intergroup relations and campus climate, increased opportunities for accessing support and mentoring systems, opportunities for acquiring broader perspectives and viewpoints, and participating in complex discussions, all of which can contribute to increased learning. There are a growing number of empirical studies that provide support for these benefits. In a study designed to examine the relationship between the diversity of the student body and interactions among students, Pike and Kuh (2006) found that a diverse student population is related to increased interaction among diverse groups of students, and that the more diverse the student population, the greater the exposure to diverse perspectives and view points. In another study, Gurin (1999) found that students acquire a very broad range of skills, motivations, values, and cognitive capacities from diverse peers when provided with the appropriate opportunities to do so. In addition, campus communities that are more racially diverse tend to create more richly varied educational experiences that prepare them better for participation in a democratic society (Chang, Denson, Sáenz & Misa, 2006). Furthermore, learning environments that are supportive of diversity can lead to more openness to diversity, critical thinking skills and greater personal development (Hu & Kuh, 2003). These and numerous other studies provide evidence that environments that support cultural diversity can contribute towards an empowering environment for all students.

### MAPPING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Canada is an immigrant society. Immigration has played an important role in transforming Canada into an ethno-culturally diverse and economically prosperous nation. The Census 2001 of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2003a)

reveals that as of May 15, 2001, 18.4% of the total population was born outside Canada, and that 13.4% were visible minorities compared with 4.7% in 1981. A large proportion of recent immigrants to Canada came from Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Africa. Moreover, according to the Ethnic Diversity Survey (Statistics Canada, 2003b), almost one-quarter (23%) of Canada's total population of 22.4 million people aged 15 years and older were identified as first-generation Canadians who were born outside Canada. The latter number indicates that a large proportion of new immigrants are university age students.

The changes in demographics have subsequently transformed the student population in higher education institutions. According to the 2001 Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium (AUCC, 2002), about 15% of first-year students self-identified as visible minorities. Furthermore, Canadian university and college campuses also host a significant number of international students. According to the OECD Annual Report (2003), 70,000 new international students registered in Canada in 2001 (about 10,000 more than in 2000), which brings the total to nearly 137,000 in contrast to 37,000 in 1980. At the graduate level, international students accounted for 17% of the total student body. These students play an important role in producing and disseminating knowledge in Canadian universities. Without a doubt, these changes have created new opportunities for development as well as new challenges. In particular, we are left grappling with questions, such as the following: What are the implications of such profound social and demographic changes for teaching and learning in higher education? Are our universities and colleges ready for such changes? What about our faculty members? Equally, do our curricula and teaching approaches reflect this diversity?

### THE POLITICS OF TEACHING: DIFFERENCE AS DEFICIT

Critical pedagogy is the underpinning theory of this analysis. Many critical theorists argue that teaching is a political act (Freire, 1995; hooks, 1994; McLaren 2003; Ng, 2003). The politics of teaching involves the exercise of critical consciousness in a decision-making process regarding what to teach and how to teach. The current curriculum in higher education in North America – characterized by its Eurocentric perspectives, standards and values – does not reflect the knowledge and experiences of our culturally diverse student population (Dei, 1996; Kitano, 1997; Tisdell, 1995). Freire (1995) illustrates how the banking model of pedagogy, in which knowledge selected by the teacher is uncritically deposited into the learner, perpetuates the oppression of the learner. According to McLaren (2003), oppression is legitimized through both standardized learning situations and unintended outcomes of the educational process – or “hidden curriculum.” As McLaren notes, the hidden curriculum refers to “the non-subject-related sets of behaviors produced in students” and it deals with “the tacit ways in which knowledge and behavior get constructed, outside the usual course materials and formally scheduled lessons” (p. 212). It includes

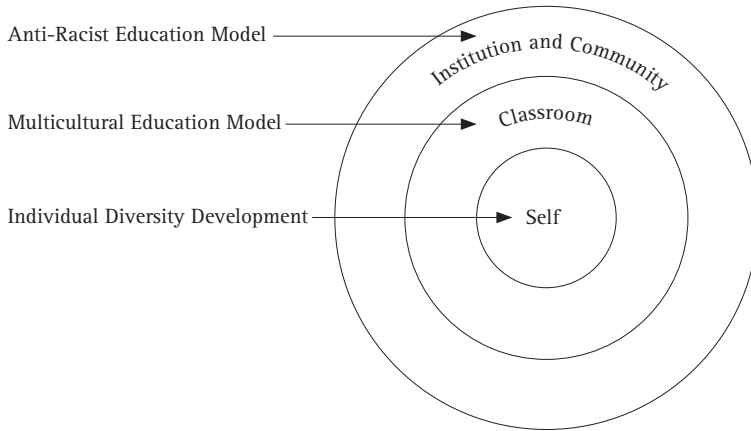
pedagogical styles, teaching and learning environments, governance structures, teacher expectations, and grading procedures.

In the Canadian context of education, the hidden curriculum has become a strong social practice that influences educators' perceptions regarding diversity and issues of knowledge construction and validation. The perception of diversity is often linked to the way in which difference is viewed. There are sufficient studies (e.g., Cummins, 2003; Dei, 1996; Ghosh & Abdi, 2004) to suggest that the perspectives and practices of "whiteness as the norm" and "colour blindness" have become the dominant hidden curriculum in Canada which constructs difference as deficit. Rather than seeing difference and diversity as an opportunity to enhance learning by using the diverse strengths, experiences, knowledge, and perspectives of students from various cultural groups, the "difference as deficit" model sees diversity ignored, minimized, or as a hindrance and obstacle to the learning process. The colour-blind perspective is a point of view which sees cultural, racial and ethnic background as irrelevant, and assumes that treating all individuals the same will erase issues of inequity and injustice (Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 2003). Although this view is superficially appealing because it seems to value all individuals equally, it negates the histories, backgrounds, and experiences of diverse cultural groups and ignores the ways in which these affect their experiences in the learning environment. Colour-blind policies which endeavour to treat all students the same may end up contributing to the perpetuation of injustices (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004).

Although the goal of promoting cultural diversity and providing an enabling environment in which it can flourish is a lofty one, these issues need to be first considered. A critical analysis of the following selected models can be used to understand and approach cultural diversity in teaching and learning in higher education.

### NURTURING CULTURAL DIVERSITY: A REVIEW OF SELECTED MODELS

The literature on responding to diversity within educational settings provides a rich array of frameworks and models that can be used to explore and understand the different elements to consider when teaching for cultural diversity and can provide a starting point to understand the role that faculty members can play at different levels. Three types of models will be reviewed: the intercultural education model, the multicultural education model, and the anti-racist education model. Each of these models can be used to create change at different levels and spheres of influence, including the self, classroom, institution, and community (Kitano, 1997) (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Sphere of Influence**

The first model is an intercultural education model for the development of individual diversity that can be used by faculty members to reflect on their own attitudes towards diversity and to promote and influence the diversity development of their students (Chávez, Guido-DiBrito & Mallory, 2003). The second model is a multicultural education model (Banks, 1997a, 1997b) that provides a framework for curriculum change and reform and can be applied at the level of the self and the classroom. Third, a model based on an anti-racist approach to education is included (Dei, James-Wilson & Zine, 2001). Although all three models provide valuable insights into the task of addressing issues of cultural diversity, this article suggests that the anti-racist model is the most inclusive one for implementing changes required in higher education institutions because it provides a critical integrative framework. It operates at all four levels of influence: the self, classroom, institution, and community. It addresses issues of difference and diversity at the level of the individual, provides strategies for both curriculum and pedagogical change, and addresses issues of power inequities in educational institutions. This section presents a brief overview of each model, followed by a discussion on the applications of each model in the context of higher education.

## INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Efforts to respond to cultural diversity within the educational system and the community have their roots in the intercultural education movement of the 1920s and 1930s, with the goal of promoting tolerance and understanding among different cultural and ethnic groups (Banks, 2005). This movement was based on the assumption that similarities among groups were more important than differences, and having enough information about cultural groups would avoid prejudice and bias and promote respect and acceptance. Efforts were made to implement programs that would help increase knowledge of other



cultures, develop positive attitudes towards difference, and teach the skills of interacting and communicating across difference. This could be done through the acquisition of intercultural competencies, defined as the “long term change of a person’s knowledge, attitudes, and skills to enable positive and effective interaction with members of other cultures” (Otten, 2003, p. 15).

The impact of the intercultural education movement in higher education has been an increased focus on creating changes in attitudes that will lead to more equitable teaching and learning environments. Faculty members and students both come to the teaching environment with varied experiences and social and cultural backgrounds, and may carry with them unexamined assumptions about the characteristics of various cultural groups with whom they are unfamiliar (Marchesani & Adams, 1992). These assumptions are often part of the mainstream cultural knowledge, and unless questioned and challenged, can become the basis from which to interact with minority cultural groups. In addition, information about general group characteristics is often applied, sometimes incorrectly, to individuals. Reflecting on and challenging assumptions requires change at the individual level.

### **An Intercultural Education Model**

The Individual Diversity Development Framework is a model proposed by Chavez et al. (2003) for use in the higher education setting. It provides a holistic approach for individual diversity development and can be used to suggest a process for faculty to reflect on their own development, as well as encourage and assist the development of their students. To deal with the complexity of people’s identities, individuals often use an essentialist approach to understand members of a different group by using their experience (or lack of it) with the group to ascribe to them a set of characteristics. These characteristics are then extended, sometimes incorrectly, to describe individuals in the group. Individuals, however, have complex and sometimes contradictory identities and can be members of many different groups, making it difficult to understand them through one set of characteristics. The individual diversity development framework demonstrates how individuals can gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of identities, and can move towards valuing and validating some of these characteristics. This change usually occurs at three levels – first at the cognitive level, followed by the affective, and then behavioural levels. The change may not be linear, and will occur gradually through practice. The diversity framework has five dimensions, and the process of learning to value a certain kind of difference can occur by moving through some or all of these dimensions. These dimensions include (1) unawareness, (2) dualistic awareness, (3) questioning and self-exploration, (4) risk-taking, and (5) integration (see Table 1).



**Table 1: A Framework of Individual Diversity Development**

Dimension	Description	Cognitive	Affective	Behavioral
Unawareness, Lack of Exposure to the Other	Lack of awareness of the other	Unaware that the other exists	No feelings for the other	Does not recognize the other
Dualistic Awareness	Awareness of the Other	Dualism between good and bad; I am good; the "other" is bad/ wrong /unnatural	Is egocentric and /or feels superior to the other; sees self as individu- al; not connected to anything	Aware that the other exists but does not validate, affirm or become involved with the other
Questioning, Self-Exploration	Questions perceptions of self and others	Moves away from dualism to relativism	Experiences feel- ings that makes one question own experience	Some conflict or meaningful encounter with the other
Risk Taking, Exploration of Otherness	Confronts own perception of the other	Self-reflection paramount	Finds courage to take risk and change behaviour toward the other	Confrontation manifests itself in way external to the individual
Integration, Validation	Makes complex choices about validating others	Commitment/in- terest in self and other	Increased self- confidence	Develops culture of integrity, congruent behaviour, thought, feeling; becomes multicultural (able to interact in and out of own culture); affirm and validate others experiences

Adapted from Chávez, Guido-DiBrito & Mallory, 2003.

### *Unawareness or Lack of Exposure to the Other*

Individuals at this dimension are unaware that a certain kind of difference exists, would exhibit no feeling about this difference and would not respond to the difference in their behaviour. Although it is unlikely that many students at the higher education level would be at this stage of awareness, there may be some differences that may not be apparent because of a lack of exposure. Individuals at this level can be encouraged to reflect on differences with which they are familiar, to move them towards a consideration of other more unfamiliar kinds of differences such as cultural diversity.

### *Dualistic Awareness*

Individuals at this level see difference in a dualistic way, as either good if familiar or bad if unfamiliar. They may choose to ignore or avoid contact with difference, or try to minimize the differences they encounter. These individuals may not have had their beliefs questioned or challenged and can benefit from being exposed to varied perspectives on issues to move them away from dualistic modes of thinking.

### *Questioning/Self-Exploration*

In this dimension, individuals begin to move away from dualistic modes of thinking, and start to see the validity of other perspectives. Initially, this process may be accompanied by fear of losing long-held beliefs, particularly if they are associated with membership of a specific group, for example, a religious group. However, as individuals become more comfortable with broader perspectives, being in this dimension can feel more comfortable and even exciting. This growth could be achieved by encouraging self reflection, having opportunities to share ideas, and being exposed to content that incorporates ideas from varied perspectives.

### *Risk Taking/Exploration of Otherness*

In this dimension, individuals have decided to challenge themselves to understand the worldviews of others, either internally through self-reflection and a search for new ways of thinking, or externally through engaging in situations in which they are compelled to alternative viewpoints. This could be encouraged through exposure to a culture whose values and beliefs are different and unfamiliar to a great degree. Individuals in this dimension can benefit from associating with others engaged in a similar process, so that challenges and dilemmas can be shared.

### *Integration/Validation*

Individuals who see difference using this dimension can no longer perceive others as having a fixed set of characteristics based on group membership, but recognize their multiple and complex identities. Individuals using the integration/validation dimension have a stronger sense of self, and are therefore able to interact comfortably both with people having different values and beliefs and in a variety of settings and contexts. They have managed to integrate their sense of self with their perception of the other, and continue to strive towards valuing and validating difference wherever they encounter it.

The increased diversity in institutions of higher education requires the creation of learning environments in which cultural differences are accepted. This requires both faculty members and students from different backgrounds and perspectives to interact, and to respond with understanding and sensitivity to

multiple perspectives. For instance, in recent years Canadian universities have attracted an increasing number of students with Confucian-Heritage cultural backgrounds (e.g., China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Singapore). One misperception towards this group is that they are docile rote learners, although there is no evidence to suggest that they learn by rote any more than their Western counterparts (Biggs, 1996). Such misperceptions influence how these students have been treated in classrooms by professors. With the intercultural education model, professional development workshops are usually offered to raise awareness of different learning traditions and to diversify faculty members' teaching styles.

The development of such awareness helps to promote tolerance and understanding among different cultural and ethnic groups. The attitudes and behaviours required for increased understanding of and engagement with diversity also have the potential to foster personal growth and development, an important outcome of the higher education process. However, creating an inclusive higher education environment requires more substantive changes than merely inclusive instructional strategies. It is essential to examine how higher education curricula, as well as pedagogical practices, contribute to inequities in learning environments, and models of multicultural education go a step beyond intercultural models by addressing these issues.

## MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

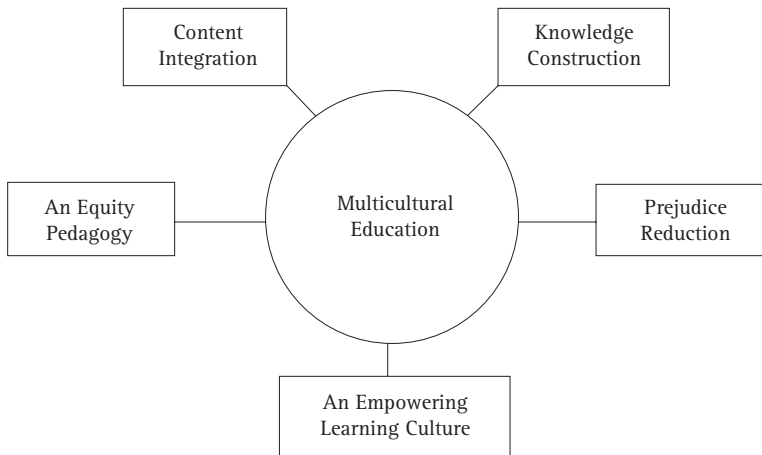
Multicultural education is a field of study that emerged in the 1960s as a response to issues of social justice and equity in the education system and was based on principles of cultural pluralism and the elimination of prejudice and discrimination in the education system. The principle of cultural pluralism asserts the right of different ethnic and cultural groups to retain their language and cultural traditions within a climate of respect for the traditions and values of different groups. In the education system, these principles can be realized by affirming the importance of culture in the teaching and learning process, and by providing opportunities for equity and academic excellence for all students, regardless of their racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds (Bennet, 2001). This goal of equity is not achieved through equality or sameness for all students, but by acknowledging that students come to the learning environment with diverse backgrounds and needs, and that curriculum and teaching practices should respond to this diversity.

The goals of multicultural education focus on change at the individual and classroom level and can be achieved by transforming pedagogical practices, reforming the curriculum, and encouraging multicultural competence (Bennet, 2003). Pedagogical practices include instructional strategies, teacher expectations, classroom climates, and practices so that all students can achieve academic excellence. Curriculum reform can be achieved by changing the Eurocentric content of the curriculum to one that is more inclusive of multicultural and multiethnic knowledge and perspectives. Multicultural competence prepares

students to live in a pluralistic and diverse society, to acknowledge and understand multiple ways of knowing, and provides the skills for them to interact and live with people who embrace many different values and traditions.

### A Multicultural Education Model

A model of multicultural education that can be used to implement change to respond to cultural diversity is Banks' model of multicultural education (Banks, 1997a). This model encompasses five dimensions: (1) content integration, (2) knowledge construction, (3) prejudice reduction, (4) an equity pedagogy, and (5) an empowering learning culture (Banks, 1997b) (see Figure 2).



Adapted from Banks, 1997a

**Figure 2. The Dimensions of Multicultural Education**

#### *Content Integration*

Content integration is a response to a predominantly Eurocentric curriculum and refers to the need for inclusion of knowledge and perspectives from a variety of cultures into the subject areas of every discipline. There are four approaches to content integration: the contributions approach, the additive approach, the transformative, and the social action approach (Banks, 1997b). In the contributions approach, content is modified to include information about specific cultural groups. The choice of which aspects of the cultural group are to be highlighted is based on the knowledge and resources accessible to instructors rather than on a deep understanding of what the cultural group considers essential knowledge (Tisdell, 1995). The additive approach to content integration goes a step further and incorporates additional content that is not represented in the curriculum. This approach can be incorporated into higher education settings by providing additional course materials or adding to course content.

The transformation approach to content integration is a more radical one in that it uses different epistemological assumptions. This approach assumes that knowledge construction is not neutral but is value laden, and that in order to include knowledge from multiple perspectives, it is necessary to make structural changes in the curriculum that provide additional and alternative perspectives in all disciplines. Lastly, the social action approach attempts to provide students with the tools to participate in decision making that can lead to social change.

### *The Knowledge Construction Process*

The process of knowledge construction is based on the frames of reference, perspectives and assumptions that are used when constructing and validating the knowledge that is produced in each discipline. Faculty members would draw attention to these processes of knowledge production so that the perspectives that have influenced the production of certain kinds of knowledge can be revealed and made explicit, and students become aware of the underlying perspectives they encounter both in the classroom and outside. The knowledge construction process encourages students to take a more critical approach, to ask complex questions about the content they encounter, and to enhance and improve their critical thinking skills and abilities.

### *Prejudice Reduction*

The objective of the prejudice reduction component of the multicultural model is to change attitudes and beliefs that are based on racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice and to encourage students to respect and value difference. The process of prejudice reduction can be facilitated by creating positive classroom environments and by providing opportunities for students of different backgrounds to work cooperatively and to respect the multiple perspectives within culturally diverse groups.

### *An Equity Pedagogy*

The concept of equity pedagogy is based on the assumption that students have diverse ways of learning influenced by their backgrounds, unique perspectives, and worldviews. To respond to this diversity in the classroom, faculty members can provide opportunities for students to learn in different ways from content that is relevant and meaningful to them, and by encouraging them to think critically about the perspectives that undergird curricular content and materials. A large part of equity pedagogy relies on faculty members' abilities to relate to and understand their students' backgrounds, their learning styles, and the social and cultural influences that have shaped their experiences.

### *An Empowering Learning Culture*

An empowering learning culture is necessary if students from diverse racial and ethnic groups are to experience equitable and empowering learning environments that are truly pluralistic. Creating change at the organizational level requires a concerted effort at all levels of an educational institution. The issues that need to be addressed include equitable access and retention, the creation of positive campus climates, adequate support for student learning, and inclusive learning environments.

This model, although developed in reference to K-12 education, can also be applied and used in higher education settings. For example, selection of course materials often stands at the centre of debate over cultural diversity at universities. Some faculty members, referred to as “essentialists” by Gutmann (1994), believe that university students should be taught the “sacred” classical canon (e.g., Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare, Darwin). These views suggest that including previously unheard voices of women and minorities would dilute the core value of Western culture. In this debate, Banks’ model of multicultural education provides a useful framework which faculty members can use to either add to or transform their course materials to provide alternate perspectives, to understand the knowledge production process, to recognize the validity of non-Eurocentric sources of knowledge, and to adjust instructional strategies and practices, all of which can contribute to a more inclusive learning culture in higher education. Unfortunately, its focus on curricular and pedagogical change disguises the need for a deeper examination of how societal inequities faced by marginalized groups are reproduced in educational environments. It fails to acknowledge that existing inequities are the result of long-standing power imbalances between majority and minority groups and that the process of knowledge production is directly linked to the power exercised by dominant groups. The focus of multicultural education on cultural difference may also serve to further exacerbate issues of exclusion by reifying and essentializing minority groups.

### ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION

In 1979, the CTV W5 broadcasted a program called “Campus Giveaway.” This episode charged that foreign students from China were taking away university spaces from white Canadians at the expense of Canadian taxpayers. This report was based on completely distorted statistics and a racist portrayal of Canadian citizens of Chinese origin as “foreign” students. The incident invoked a massive protest which first began in the student community in Toronto and then spread to 16 cities in Canada. This program raised many important questions about the belonging of minority students in Canadian universities and the reproduction of entrenched racism in a learning environment. Unfortunately these questions cannot be adequately addressed by fostering inclusive pedagogical practices as advocated by multicultural education.

One response to the above incident, and the critique of multicultural education, has been to move from the notion of multicultural education to a more critical conceptualization of inclusive education which addresses broader structural issues and confronts the impact of racism on the lives and educational experiences of students. In contrast to models of multicultural education, anti-racist education models highlight issues of difference, power, and privilege. They are based on the assumption that improved cross-cultural understanding, co-operation, and respect for difference do not address the structural causes of inequity, and that meaningful change can only occur when barriers to inclusive education are challenged and addressed at all levels where they occur (Dei et al., 2000).

### **An Anti-Racist Education Model**

Dei et al. (2000) propose a critical integrative approach to inclusive education, a model for change based on an anti-racist approach. This model “views education as a racially, culturally, and politically mediated experience” (p. 8). The model encompasses four learning objectives for both faculty members and students: (1) integrating multiple centres of knowledge, (2) recognition and respect for difference, (3) effecting social and educational change: equity, access, and social justice, and (4) teaching for community empowerment.

#### *Integrating Multiple Centres of Knowledge*

This objective involves adding diverse sources of knowledge to the current emphasis on Eurocentric sources so that traditionally marginalized sources can be affirmed and validated. Rather than being an add-on, these centres of knowledge would be integrated into the curriculum at all levels, and would provide alternative centres of knowledge to add to and enrich the learning experiences of all students. The model makes particular reference to three sources of knowledge that have been marginalized: indigenous, spiritual, and community knowledge. Indigenous knowledge refers to knowledge that people acquire and use in their everyday lives, based on social and cultural interpretations of their environment. Spiritual knowledge refers to knowledge that is acquired through intuition, revelation or enlightenment, and may or may not be associated with institutionalized religion. Community knowledge is similar to indigenous knowledge and refers to specific content of alternative community-based programs such as cultural and language programs for specific groups.

#### *Recognition and Respect for Difference*

This objective recognizes the need to consider and value the complex identities of students, and to ensure that teaching practices acknowledge and validate these identities. This can be done by designing learning strategies that accommodate the diversity of groups as well as considering the diversity within groups as being salient in the learning environment. Faculty members need to



recognize and understand their own positions in relation to their students and to work towards uncovering the beliefs, values and assumptions they themselves use to respond to cultural diversity.

### *Effecting Social and Educational Change: Equity, Access and Social Justice*

This objective requires that faculty acknowledge the existing inequities in educational structures and environments, understand their role in these structures, and actively advocate for change. Change can occur at all levels of an institution and can be created by challenging existing institutional structures that ignore the needs of minority groups, by working for a more inclusive institutional climate. This requires a consideration of how policies and programs that address issues of equity can be formulated and implemented to respond to educational inequity. With this objective, the role of faculty extends from the sphere of the classroom into the community, and requires engaging with social and political issues. Systemic change alters the university in fundamental ways. Its multifaceted nature has an impact on decision-making practices, student and faculty recruitment, reward systems, information systems, and even work structures. It fosters new forms of scholarship that often challenge dominant research paradigms in the disciplines. Systemic change calls on current faculty members, students, and administrators to shift, assess their values, have an openness to new ideas, and act in different ways. It often changes mission statements, and has an impact on retention, promotion, and tenure decisions through the valuing of multiculturalism and international perspectives in research and teaching. Thus, to bring about a truly transformed curriculum requires fundamental and systemic change in the organization itself.

### *Teaching for Community Empowerment*

The last dimension of the model focuses on building capacity for engagement by working towards increased individual and group self-esteem through the active involvement of all concerned groups in decision making related to the educational process. This requires collaboration among teachers, students, administrators and the community to work for change at a broader level.

A critical integrative framework for inclusive education begins with the assertion that the creation of inclusive educational environments requires educators to be aware of how inequities in the classroom are a reflection of inequities in the wider society, to consider the nature of these inequities and the power imbalances inherent in them, and to employ approaches and strategies which challenge these inequities at all levels to respond to the needs of those who are "in the margins."

## DISCUSSION OF MODELS

The three models presented in the previous section each address certain aspects of teaching and learning in culturally diverse classrooms and can be used

as a starting point for creating inclusive teaching and learning environments at different levels of influence and in different contexts. The main differences between the intercultural, multicultural, and anti-racist education models are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: Intercultural, Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education: A Comparison**

	Intercultural Education	Multicultural Education	Anti-Racist Education
Sphere of Activity and Influence	Individual	Individual and classroom	Individual, classroom, educational institutions and community
Issues	Lack of acceptance and fear of diversity	Eurocentric pedagogy and curriculum content	Inequitable systemic policies and practices
Targeted Change	Individual attitudes	Individual attitudes, pedagogy and curriculum	Structural change
Long Term Goals	Acceptance of diversity	Equity in learning environments	Societal equity and justice

The first model presented, the individual diversity development framework, can be used by faculty members to understand how cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes towards diversity can be transformed to arrive at a deeper understanding of our complex identities and to encourage and promote multicultural competencies in the learning environment. Faculty members can use the model to reflect on their own growth in valuing diversity, as well as the growth of their students. The model provides suggestions for activities and experiences which would promote and encourage movement along the various dimensions of the model to arrive at a better understanding of the many kinds of difference we encounter in our lives.

Although these strategies may be very useful in encouraging the diversity development of faculty members, this model addresses only change at the individual level and does not link this change to changes required at institutional and societal levels. Furthermore, intercultural education is usually based on a depoliticized and static definition of culture. The emphasis on understanding the characteristics of culturally diverse groups can lead to reified and essentialist notions of culture, ignoring the fact that cultural characteristics are not fixed but fluid and dynamic, and are always mediated by differences within groups such as gender, class, language, religion, as well as varied histories and experiences (Fleras & Elliot, 2003). The individual model of diversity development does not directly address issues of curriculum transformation, of pedagogical strategies, or of inequity at the institutional level.

In comparison, the multicultural education provides a more comprehensive way of understanding inclusive education and implementing change at the

classroom level. Banks' model of multicultural education can be used to derive appropriate strategies and activities for the culturally diverse classroom by examining how curriculum content and pedagogical practices can be transformed. The model includes five dimensions and each of these can be used to derive specific strategies to create learning environments that respond to diverse needs. This includes either adjusting or transforming the curriculum, paying attention to the processes of knowledge construction and validation, and using culturally appropriate pedagogical methods which address the learning needs and different backgrounds of all students, rather than focusing on the needs of the majority group. The dimension of an empowering learning culture is a reminder that changes at the classroom level can be more effective when supported by an environment that fosters a culture of respect and value for diversity. The multicultural education movement has played a significant role in addressing issues of diversity in higher education.

Like intercultural education, its scope of influence tends to focus on changes at the individual and classroom level. Despite the forms it takes, multicultural education has failed to nurture cultural diversity effectively in higher education due to its monoculturalism in terms of vision, content, and style (James & Wood, 2005). To be more specific, its curriculum integration usually takes an add-on approach, which tends to be cosmetic and superficial. The focus on encouraging knowledge of different cultural groups, harmonious social relations with these groups, and curricular and pedagogical change is firmly located within a consensus paradigm which ignores existing inequities and asymmetries of power that influence social relationships. Under multicultural education, differences have been exoticized and trivialized. While minor differences may be gently affirmed in depoliticized and decontextualized forms such as food, dance, and festivities, substantive differences that challenge hegemony and resist being co-opted are usually perceived by many as deficient, deviant, pathological, or otherwise divisive. In short, one fatal weakness of multicultural education lies in its inability to tackle issues of systemic and structural inequity which exist in the wider society and are reproduced in educational institutions (Dei et al., 2000; Marshall, 2002).

The criticism directed towards models of intercultural and multicultural education has led to a deeper examination of how educational systems can address the shortcomings of these models as well as modify and add to these approaches. One response has been the model of anti-racist education, which builds on the previous two models, but adds several new dimensions. The model is based on the assumption that changes at the institutional level cannot occur in isolation – they must be considered in light of the existing inequities in society that are reproduced in educational institutions; however, groups have the power and agency to resist and challenge these inequities by actively engaging in and advocating change.

In contrast to a consensus-based intercultural and multicultural education, anti-racist education moves beyond a narrow preoccupation with individual prejudice and discriminatory actions to challenge power differentials be-

tween sociocultural groups in society. It explicitly names the issues of race and sociocultural difference as issues of power and equity rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety. Whereas multicultural education focuses on the celebration and understanding of culture, anti-racist education questions how sociocultural differences are used to entrench inequality. It interrogates White privilege and power and how they work together to construct and maintain social inequality. Furthermore, anti-racist education incorporates gender, class, and sexuality into its analysis of race. As Moodley (1995) notes, the strengths of anti-racist education over multicultural education lie in its incorporation of historical analysis, its differentiated discussion of how different groups experience racism, and the interconnections it draws among different kinds of oppression such as gender and racial oppression.

Furthermore, this model highlights the need to move traditionally marginalized centers of knowledge away from the margins and towards the centre, and to focus on inclusive decision making which addresses issues of equity, access and social justice. It works “against the grain” (Ng, 2003) in arguing that educators cannot claim to remain neutral in the provision and utilization of educational knowledge in higher education. Through its analysis of the social construction of knowledge, it questions what is defined as valid knowledge and how such knowledge has been used to negate and devalue the experience of subordinated groups. Anti-racist education calls for creating space for everyone, but particularly for marginal voices to be heard in higher education.

The anti-racist education model presented in this article addresses the need for change at the individual and classroom levels, but suggests that social justice in educational settings can only be achieved if these changes are accompanied by changes at the structural and institutional levels. The model is a more holistic approach to creating equitable and inclusive learning environments, and can be used in a variety of contexts.

## CONCLUSION

Responding to the needs of culturally diverse students requires change at a number of different levels of higher education, starting from the self, and moving towards change at the classroom, institutional and community levels. Change at the individual level can be facilitated by examining individual perceptions of diversity of faculty members and students, and by working towards a position where diversity in others is affirmed and validated. The framework for individual diversity development can assist in this task. The multicultural education model can be applied at the classroom level to transform both curriculum content and pedagogy. The anti-racist education model is a critical integrative approach which addresses issues of difference, power, and social inequality, and provides a way to bring about change at the structural and institutional levels. This article concludes that to nurture cultural diversity in a context where teaching is a political act, the anti-racist education model is the most appropriate one for implementing change in a higher education setting. ♦

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