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“No More Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellowcitizens:” Multicultural Education and Conflict

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“No More Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellowcitizens:” Multicultural Education and Conflict

Jamon F. Peariso

Abstract

This paper argues that prevalent forms of multicultural education are separatist and divisive in nature, irrational, inequitable, and can cause conflict. A unifying brand of multicultural education is offered as an alternative which builds on commonalities, can alleviate conflict, fosters academic achievement for all students, and is built on Christian principles.

KEYWORDS: Multiculturalism, Multicultural Education, Conflict Management

“No More Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellowcitizens”: Multicultural Education and Conflict

Today, American public schools are more multicultural, multiethnic, and diverse than ever before. Political and educational policy makers are fast at work to find solutions to the conflicts and perceived inequalities this rapidly forming diversity creates within our schools. One of the most widely used solutions to the conflicts and inequalities this diversity creates is multicultural education, concisely defined as “a pathway toward social justice” (Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather, & Walker, 2002, p. 69).

Multicultural education programs generally focus on curriculum and whole-school change through systematic levels of implementation. A common goal of these multicultural education programs is social reconstructivist in nature, in that it sets out to teach students to be critical of the prevailing culture and heritage and to take action against real or perceived inequalities among race, class, gender, and handicap (Banks, 1997; Grant & Sleeter, 1989).

It can be argued that the brand of multiculturalism described above is divisive in nature and can cause contention rather than unification and reconciliation. This brand of multiculturalism also creates greater inequalities among ethnicities and socioeconomic classes in exact opposition to its call for social justice and equality. The intention of this paper is to analyze this separatist brand of multicultural education, which distinguishes differences and therefore causes conflict and greater inequalities. Then another approach is offered, a form of multiculturalism which unifies by building on commonalities and fostering academic achievement for all students; this form is based on Christian principles and therefore alleviates conflict and creates greater equality.

Separatist Multicultural Education Approaches Defined

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The separatist brand of multiculturalism at its most basic level is the denial that one can be judged by another's standards (Kalb, 2008). To a large extent, this brand of multiculturalism is based on such divisive theories as critical race theory (CRT), Paulo Freire's liberation pedagogy (LP), and culturally-responsive pedagogy (CRP).

CRT was first established through the field of critical legal studies, which critically looked at the social construct of race and legal decisions based on those constructs. CRT eventually found its way into the field of education for the purpose of analyzing racial inequalities and the social construction of race and discrimination within the educational setting (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Common elements of CRT include the ability to name one's own reality, a view of racism as "normal" in American society, and a critical posture toward liberalism (in the classical sense) because of its inability to create sweeping changes (Ladson-Billings). CRT also has a radical element in its call to action. Ladson-Billings suggests that those who adhere to CRT "may have to defend a radical approach to democracy that seriously undermines the privilege of those who have so skillfully carved that privilege into the foundation of the nation" (p. 22).

A common theme in the scholarship of CRT is the notion that established forms of tradition and governance in the United States are classified as "White culture." As evidence of this, in the peer-reviewed journal *Race Ethnicity and Education*, Knaus (2009) provides further characterization of CRT. Knaus states that CRT "centers on the notion of racism as normal, as the typical way in which life in the US is structured in terms of laws, policies, procedures, and practices . . . [CRT] exposes how mainstream schools promote racism through White-supremacist teaching practices, White-based curriculum, and school designs that privilege White

culture by ignoring and/or denying how racism shapes the lives of students of color" (p. 142).

Knaus goes on to state that the radical goal of "Critical race theory must be to de-center Whiteness as a means of de-centering racism" (p. 142).

Knaus's (2009) de-centering "Whiteness as a means of de-centering racism" is precisely the "radical approach to democracy" Ladson-Billings (1998) was suggesting. Evidence of this aspect of CRT, as applied to the educational setting, can be seen in an ethnographic study of fourth grade students in a multiracial classroom. Schaffer and Skinner (2009) note, after a lesson on slavery, a Euro-American female student emotionally stated that she was "embarrassed" and "ashamed" of her color. Schaffer and Skinner found that after such lessons the "black students were . . . vigilant in policing racial boundaries" (p. 293).

Along similar lines of Schaffer's and Skinner's (2009) research, Glazier (2009) found that when teachers were attempting to learn about culture in the company of diverse colleagues, those of different minority races and ethnicities were automatically positioned as cultural experts, which limited the ability of those involved to reposition themselves and to open lines of communication, and inhibited the overall group learning. Therefore, CRT asserts that the only way to end racism and discrimination, especially in the educational setting, is to dispute and displace the prevalent culture.

Along similar lines to CRT, Freire's liberation pedagogy (LP), which was heavily influenced by existentialist and materialist ideologies, is based on the premise that education offers the power to liberate oppressed people from the social, economic, and political conditions that often disempower and marginalize them (Guttek, 2005). In essence, LP aims to eradicate what Freire claims is a false consciousness by providing truly liberating education which would

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allow students to construct a truer consciousness through a critical examination of what empowers and disempowers others (Gutek). LP thus sees the world through the lens of the oppressor and the oppressed.

As reported in Stern (2009), Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, outlines the philosophy of LP and is one of the most commonly assigned texts in philosophy of education courses in some of the top schools of education in the United States. LP applied in the context of education criticizes teacher-directed instruction as a misguided and oppressive "banking" concept which limits the students to only what is deposited or taught. Instead Freire suggests "that teachers partner with their coequals, the students, in a 'dialogic' and 'problem-solving' process until the roles of teacher and student merge into 'teacher-students' and 'student-teachers'" (Stern, para. 12).

The last type of divisive (yet mild compared to CRT and LP) multiculturalism is Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) which suggests the cultural background of each student should be considered for a teacher's instructional best-practices (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Therefore, "equality" is not treating everyone the same, but treating everyone differently, through the lens of race, ethnicity, language, and gender. CRP denies the possibility of "color-blindness" of educators and asserts that education can be a means of assimilation of students into mainstream society (Moon, Jung, Bang, Kwon, & Suh, 2009).

An important aspect of CRP is an emphasis placed on student-centered constructivist pedagogy and content's "relevance" to a students' culture, ethnicity, etc. (Klump & McNeir, 2005; Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Regarding relevance, Sowell (2003) minces no words when he states,

It is absurd to imagine that students can determine in advance what will turn out to be relevant to their progress as adults. Relevance is not something you can predict. It is something you discover after the fact . . . The fetish of "relevance" has been particularly destructive in the education of minority students at all levels. If the students do not see immediately how what they are studying applies to their lives in the ghetto, then it is supposed to be irrelevant. (para. 2, 7)

Therefore, students are often taught, under these divisive types of multiculturalism, to test the relevance of curriculum and instruction, which often leads to bad attitudes towards any curriculum, instruction, or instructor they decide is irrelevant. Ruggiero (2000) discusses this issue of students' bad attitudes, which he states are a result of a revolution of "self," based on egocentrism and ethnocentrism which CRP tends to foster. Ruggiero goes on to state that instead of personal responsibility and accountability with words such as self-criticism, self-denial, self-discipline, self-control, self-effacement, self-mastery, self-reproach, and self-sacrifice, the language now is self-expression, self-assertion, self-indulgence, self-realization, self-approval, self-acceptance, self-love, and self-esteem. Ruggiero suggests that this focus on self leads to unhealthy attitudes such as the following: "Being myself makes self-discipline unnecessary"; "If I have high self-esteem I will be successful"; "I have a right to my opinion, so my opinions are right"; "Expressing my negative feelings will relieve them"; and "The teacher's job is to entertain me" (p. 5-8).

CRT, LP, and CRP are the foundational ideologies of the separatist brand of multiculturalism. As applied multicultural education, this separatist brand focuses on the cultural and ethnic differences of students and debases the ideal of a common culture and assimilation,

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but advocates bilingual education for immigrant students with the preference placed in speaking their native language instead of promptly mastering English. These separatist brands of multiculturalism are critical of the United States for failing to live up to its ideals and principles and for having been an oppressor from its founding to the present (Holland, 2004).

Schmidt (1997) further contends that multiculturalists of the separatist brand “ignore the negative aspects of other cultures, particularly the practices of minority or non-Western cultures. They prefer to highlight only the flaws in American culture. By doing the latter multiculturalists encourage Americans to become xenocentric and non-Western minority groups ethnocentric, really promoting cultural separatism” (p. 11).

The separatist approach to multicultural education thus fosters xenocentricism, namely every culture is as “good” as any other (Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather, & Walker, 2002). With this view, the dominant culture is often seen as repressive of other “equal” cultures. An example of this call for equality of cultures is in the push for equality in language or even language rights within the United States. The separatists see the need for the “celebration of diversity” through public policy, but as Holland (2004) states, “There is nothing diverse about immigrants living as separate cultural enclaves and being encouraged by public schools to continue to cling to their own language, culture, customs, and history to the exclusion of learning the heritage and language of their adopted land. Public education is forfeiting its historic mission of assimilating immigrant families into a united America” (p. 3).

Another aspect of the separatist approach of multiculturalism is the ideology which defines equality as “equal outcome” opposed to “equal opportunity.” Equal outcome is a Marxist/socialist/egalitarian notion within a defined group based on race, class, or gender, which

has historically shown through its implementation to be a failure in preserving individual liberty or equality and in resolving conflict (Ebeling, 1993). These systems use government controls and mandates which are key in their attempts of equal outcome. One doesn't have to look further than the failure of court-ordered attempts at integration, such as forced busing, to fix the achievement gap and interracial conflicts (Fryer, 2006; Stern, 2006). It takes much more than government intervention and court-ordered social justice mandates to achieve solutions to pressing issues such as the achievement gap.

This divisive brand of multiculturalism also limits critical thinking and freedom of thought and expression through forced conformity to the standards of political correctness. These methods stand against the hallmarks of the educational process of learning through questioning and debating different opinions and views.

A current example of the influence this coercive conformity espouses can be seen in the experience an education student named Ed Swan had at Washington State University (WSU). Swan often expressed his openly conservative views, particularly his opposition to affirmative action, which caused him repeatedly to fail the university's "professional disposition evaluation." WSU threatened him with expulsion from the program based on his performance on the evaluation which "required that students demonstrate . . . an understanding of the complexities of race, power, gender, class, sexual orientation and privilege in American society" (Hines, 2007, p. 59). After a civil-liberties group came to his defense, Swan was allowed to continue in the program, and the university revised their evaluation process (Hines). Civil liberties groups, such as the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), have come to the defense of hundreds of individuals whose free speech, religious liberties, due process rights, or freedom of

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conscience was violated due to this separatist brand of multiculturalism, which has led schools and universities to implement policies as speech-codes (FIRE, 2009).

The ideology of this separatist brand of multiculturalism is difficult to rationalize by its assumption that people are or see themselves as mono-ethnic, mono-racial, or mono-national. According to a recent Associated Press report (2007) interracial marriages are flourishing in the United States, blending races, nationalities, and ethnicities, and creating multiracial, multinational, and multiethnic populations. The article further discusses, as an example, a particular student who was born in New Jersey of a mother born in Sweden and a father born in Haiti. If one insists on being culturally responsive, by which culture, nationality, or race is it proper to label this student? Ladson-Billings (1995a) states that students' culture does matter in the teaching and learning of students. Therefore, in regard to the multinational, multiethnic, and biracial student mentioned in the Associated Press report, what culture should prevail in the differentiation of instruction if all cultures, races, nationalities, and languages are to be considered equal?

Webster (1997) adds that much of the separatist brand of multicultural education also tends to increase and intensify students' awareness of racial and ethnic differences in the attempted effort to liberate students from oppression. This intensified awareness of differences often results in perceived discrimination, which further leads to more protests and the recommendation for more multicultural education.

Milligan (1999) further suggests that multicultural education is excessively flawed in its devotion to inclusion and empowerment. Milligan argues that inclusion requires people to be classified by generally incoherent means because it ignores many social grouping (such as

religion) which are more specific and accurate means of self-identification. Milligan goes on to state, “All too often multicultural education reifies the categories it uses by treating them as if they were accurate descriptions of an objective social reality rather than contingent social constructions, created by outside observers, which often ignore the identities constructed and claims by the individuals supposedly included in such categories” (Idolatry of Inclusion, para. 3).

Milligan (1999) states that even if one assumes these categories are useful, the idea of inclusion in multicultural education presents problems such as “curricular abundance.” There are more cultures represented in many public schools than the school would have time to address meaningfully in the curriculum. Who decides, and on what basis, which cultures will be included and which ones will be excluded? Therefore, inclusion as a concept does not end the process of exclusion.

Glazer (1998) further argues that the problem with grouping and self-identification is that “the self refers to the racial and ethnic self. But of course we are all made up of many selves. The assumption in multiculturalism is that, of these many selves, one is dominant” (p. 49). Feinberg (1996) suggests if a child is conditioned to think of himself or herself as one-dimensional, this can limit the child’s tendency to understand and explore other possible dimensions. Therefore, cultural pride can lead to the severing of possible contact with members of various groups who have expanded interests, which will inevitable result in limiting a child’s growth.

The devotion to empowerment by separatist multicultural education is also problematic. Milligan (1999) discusses the ways in which the concept of empowerment hides the “constructedness and fluidity of power” through the example of how one subject may be powerful in one situation but powerless in another. For example, one of a particular gender and

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race in one circumstance possesses a degree of social power based on one's race, while at the same time might be disempowered based on their gender.

The separatist brand of multiculturalism further creates contradictions which show its general irrationality. Kalb (2008) delineates some of these contradictions, namely:

- 1) If [the separatist brand of multiculturalism] lets people choose their own values [based on race, culture, sexual orientation, etc.], how can it prescribe their opinions of others' values?
- 2) If choosing one's own values [based on race, culture, etc.] is good, why does it become bad if one chooses cultural cohesion and traditional sex roles?
- 3) How can "diversity" (respecting differences) and "inclusiveness" (destroying the effect of differences) be the same?
- 4) Equal celebration of cultures means that every particular cultural standard must be driven out of social life, since otherwise one culture dominates others. How is that situation different from the abolition of culture?
- 5) [The Separatist brand of multiculturalism] says that the public celebration of diversity does not violate conscience because in private people can still think what they like. Would it equally respect conscience if the Pope ran things and insisted on the public celebration of Catholicism while permitting private free thought?

An Alternative: A Unifying Multicultural Approach Defined

The unifying approach of multiculturalism is defined as one that recognizes the reality that America is diverse and multicultural, but stresses the values Americans have in common.

This common American culture further recognizes that its creation was due to the involvement of

a diverse body of influences buying into the American ideal. Therefore, Holland (2004) states the primary mission of education in this unifying brand of multiculturalism is to assimilate children from their various cultures and backgrounds into a unified America, providing all students the opportunity of societal access via English proficiency, knowledge of the national heritage, and relevant competitive skills to ensure success in the workplace and in their civic responsibilities.

The idea of building on commonalities is the principle of success in any endeavor of requiring diverse people to accomplish a goal. As an example of this, Hirko (2007) conducted research among intercollegiate athletes which exhibited the findings that building on commonalities and working toward a common goal supersedes and lessens ethnic and racial conflict. Hirko states, “The unique nature of athletics with its common goals and cooperation provides an opportunity for individual athletes to be perceived as teammates first, and not first as members of a racial group.” Wouldn’t teaching a common culture and building on commonalities in schools have the same results as shown in Hirko’s research? It needs to be noted that one’s uniqueness and talents are not tossed aside, but they are employed to achieve the overarching goal such as on an athletic team. Hirko’s research sets a general model of what unifying multiculturalism can be.

The unifying brand of multiculturalism understands that prevailing culture does indeed matter and that those who are proficient in that culture are generally more successful than those who are not. Cultural proficiency provides those who are favored with positions within the dominate culture with certain advantages that those raised in other cultures do not have or will have to struggle to obtain (Feinberg, 1996). Therefore, in the realm of unifying multicultural education the focus is on providing *all* students access to those favored positions reserved to

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those who are culturally and linguistically proficient by focusing education to meet this end. Unifying multiculturalism sets to establish what Feinberg (1996) states is pluralistic in nature and desires society to treat individuals as equals in a common public sphere, while also allowing for those of different cultures and orientations to express their way of life in a separate private cultural sphere.

The underlying ideal of the unifying brand of multiculturalism is equality as “equal opportunity,” as opposed to “equal outcome,” which the separatist brand of multiculturalism fosters. With this principle of equal opportunity comes individual responsibility to adapt to the vested interests and the self-preservation of a free and democratic society and for society to protect one’s access to the democratic process. America has long relied on its public schools to teach its youth the importance of self-governing democracy because “just as students must learn to value themselves as individuals, to value their families, and to value their community, so too should they learn to value the nation of which they are citizens” (Ravitch, 2006, p. 98).

Unifying multiculturalism rejects cultural relativism, which is the belief that all cultures are equal. D’Souza (1995) suggests that cultural relativism does not equate to real world everyday observations. D’Souza further suggests that cultural relativism is actually a Western ideological construct which all other non-Western cultures reject. Unifying multiculturalism is inclusive in that it celebrates and builds upon commonalities and fosters those relationships in the public sphere.

Unifying Multiculturalism and Christianity

Concerning a Christian perspective on these two approaches, The Holy Bible’s Ephesians 4:13-17 (KJV) give excellent guidance: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the

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knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk . . . ”

Cultures, languages, races, and customs can be celebrated, but Jesus Christ is a unifier, one which always will have His arms stretched out to guide, rescue, and claim all of mankind. All those who join Christ are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19, KJV). This revelation, given to Peter caused him to say, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35, KJV). Kalb’s (2008) statement that the separatist brand of multiculturalism of the “denial that one’s acts can be judged by another’s standards” (p. 41) is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ and denies the principle of absolute truth.

In the great intercessory prayer Jesus gives insight on a vital principle of the gospel He established, namely unity, when He prayed: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17: 21-22 KJV). The oneness Jesus for which prayed is oneness of purpose and

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desire. Those who profess to follow Christ and consider themselves superior to others or place priority on grouping themselves by ethnicity and race are therefore falling short of what Jesus Christ has called for. The United States is full of different influential forces such as culture, socioeconomic status, and geographic location, among others. Out of this, one must purge from one's life those values, customs, traditions and attitudes which do not conform to this principle of unity and oneness.

For those who profess to follow Him, especially in the field of education and educational policy, the moral obligation regarding multiculturalism and the conflict it causes is to teach students what has been proven to add to their success, tools that give knowledge, tools that give individuals the ability to choose, tools that bring unity and foster mutual respect, forgiveness, and love, as opposed to those which "lie in wait to deceive" through division.

Unifying Multicultural Education and Conflict Resolutions

In the Christian classroom or not, there is no doubt that the goal of education is to give students the opportunity and tools to succeed in today's world with those around them. Pedagogy built upon division, victimology, reparations, anger, and jealousy push the oppressed into further oppression and create self-esteem issues and conflict. If true individual liberation and resolving conflicts are desired, then build bridges, unify, and give students the tools for academic success and successful tools for defusing conflict successfully. Obtaining knowledge and skills creates greater equality.

The field of cognitive psychology has emphasized that critical thinking is intertwined with domain knowledge (Willingham, 2006, 2007). Knowing that one should think critically is not the same as being able to do so. That requires domain knowledge and practice. Hirsch (2009)

argues that the only way to successfully address social and economic inequalities is through a content-rich curriculum. Despite arguments about exactly what content to teach, empirical research has shown that content-rich, explicit, direct instruction is most effective among students of minority and low socioeconomic status (Marzano, Kendall, & Gaddy, 1999; Rosenshine, 2009).

Those of the separatist brand of multiculturalism focus on culturally-responsive pedagogy among others, which is based on student-centered constructivist pedagogy and content relevance to a student's culture, ethnicity, race, and gender as mentioned previously (Klump & McNeir, 2005; Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). They criticize schools which develop a content-rich, knowledge-based curriculum which will create greater equality through prevalent cultural literacy. Instead, this separatist brand of multicultural education supports a utopian vision which sets out to create the new man by schools being “laboratories for a more just society than the one we live in now Classrooms can be places of hope, where students and teachers gain glimpses of the kind of society we could live in and where students could learn the academic and critical skills to make it a reality” (Bigelow & Miner, 1994, p. 4). In other words, the goal of the separatist brand of multicultural education is to be critical of prevailing culture and practices, or as they put it, to create students who are socially and politically conscious by requiring every student to critically examine societal policies and practices, and to work to correct injustices that exist (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2006).

Unfortunately, this social constructivism often leads to groupthink and denies other nonconstructivist but effective educational theories which have been successful with disadvantaged children who benefit from more explicit instruction (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2009).

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Tobias (2009) observes that those who insist on this student-centered constructivism provide “stimulating rhetoric for the constructivist position, but relatively little research supporting it” (p. 346). Kirchner, Sweller, and Clark (2006) further state, “After a half-century of advocacy . . . in so far as there is any evidence from controlled studies, it almost uniformly supports direct, strong instructional guidance rather than constructivist-based minimal guidance during the instruction” (p. 83).

It thus can be ascertained that if one wants diverse student populations to display equality in their ability to think critically, read, write, and speak effectively, and to have the knowledge to compete in today’s world, then having students master the knowledge of the prevalent American culture would be the moral imperative. Stotsky (1991) states that unfortunately the separatist brand of multicultural education has caused many students to have few common literary experiences, which may cause harm in a diverse American society in building and cultivating common ground and alleviating possible conflict.

Great lessons can be learned from the Balkans, a region of extreme conflict whose name is the origin of the term *balkanization*. In a country of extreme tribalism and hatred because of religious, cultural, and historic differences, Zwingle (2008) discusses a beacon of hope being taught in the schools of Macedonia. The underlying foundation of the program discussed by Zwingle is that of commonalities: bridge building without one side or the other being forced into a role of oppressor and oppressed which is in exact opposition to the critical race theory. It can be concluded that Macedonia is attempting to develop the truly American notion of *e pluribus unum*, meaning “from many, one.”

The unifying model of multicultural education will bring generations of unified citizens under a common American culture and will no doubt lessen cultural conflict. How does this translate on an individual level, within the classroom or school setting? Lederach (1995) states that conflict is a socially constructed event and that people are active participants in creating the situations and interactions they often experience as conflict. Therefore, schools should end practices that promote cultural separatism such as school-sponsored clubs, organizations, or celebrations based on specific race or non-common American culture. Henze, Katz, Norte, and Sather (2001) concede that such clubs and organizations on school campuses can indeed lead to balkanization.

One's individual culture should be fostered at home or in the private sector. School curriculum should focus on how the freedom, prosperity, and tolerance that is enjoyed in the United States was the result of long spiritual and cultural development, not to be taken for granted (Dalrymple, 2004). Cross-cultural techniques and curriculum should also be fostered, which create understanding of cultural norms, end cultural assumptions, recognize cultural differences, create mutual respect, patience, flexibility, and a willingness to learn about one another (Delaney, 2000). Unity built upon our commonalities should be the goal for successful unifying multicultural education which will lessen conflict.

A model which creates unification, lessens conflicts, and fosters academic success in multicultural urban schools has been the school structure built on traditional paternalism. Whitman (2008) states that paternalistic programs “remain controversial because they seek to change the lifestyles of the poor rather than the lifestyles of the middle-class and upper-class families” (p. 55). Whitman further goes on to explain, “The most distinctive feature of new

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paternalistic schools is that they are fixated on curbing disorder. That is why these schools devote inordinate attention to making sure that shirts are tucked in, bathrooms are kept clean, students speak politely, and trash is picked up” (p. 56). Those of the separatist brand of multiculturalism criticize this paternal system which they believe denies students freedom and liberties. A principal of such a school argues that “the problem of poverty or underachievement is not that the poor lack freedom. The real problem is that the poor are too free” (Whitman, p. 58). What the principal is referring to is that empirical evidence suggests that minorities and children in poverty “do best when structure and expectations are crystal clear, rather than presuming that kids should learn to figure things out for themselves” (Whitman, p. 58).

This paternal model, with its structure and curriculum built on a common culture, has a proven success rate (Whitman, 2008). Whitman outlines the habits of highly effective urban schools based this paternal concept, which have several factors including these: 1) tell students exactly how to behave and tolerate no disorder; 2) require a rigorous, college-prep curriculum; 3) build a collective culture of achievement and college going; and 4) reject the culture of the streets.

If doing what is fair, just, and ethical is the goal, there is no avenue other than the unifying brand of multiculturalism, which builds on commonalities and the common academic culture to promote success of all students. The traditional paternal model fosters an educational system of academic success and curbs conflict. If one wants the future generations of this country to think critically and continue the great democratic experiment then, as one of the great founding fathers, John Adams (1787) once said, “Children should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom.” This is done through fostering a love of country, knowledge of civics,

and academic literacy, and through bringing together the best of our diversity for the common goal of academic excellence and continued adherence to democratic principles.

Noguera and Cohen (2006) point out that “the pioneers of the idea of public education—Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann, and John Dewey—argued that schools were essential to the health and well-being of our republic. They understood that an uneducated citizenry would doom the republic because ignorant citizens would be incapable of electing good leaders or voting out of office those who abused their power. As educators, it is our democratic responsibility to foster critical thinking among our students” (p. 95). It is to be remembered that critical thinking is intertwined with domain knowledge (Willingham, 2006, 2007). Educators providing domain or content knowledge based on groupthink or divisive, and contentious views toward a common American culture which is based on democracy, individual liberty, and individual responsibility, would indeed be folly.

In conclusion, the educational setting must foster the principles of unity, respect of differences, and building upon commonalities. With citizenship in the United States come rights but also responsibilities. These responsibilities are to foster, bear up, and participate in the democratic system that affords liberty to its citizens. Educators have a moral responsibility to give students what they need for their future success and their continued support for America’s democratic system. There is no better way in establishing the Christian principle of unity and in fostering democratic ideals in the education of America’s present and future generations, than in those principles of unifying multiculturalism. Unifying multiculturalism provides the way for all those who are in the United States or desire to be in the future, *no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens*.

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