

Four Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform

The Contributions Approach

This approach reflects the least amount of involvement in multicultural education approaches. This is incorporated by selecting books and activities that celebrate holidays, heroes, and special events from various cultures. For example, spending time reading about Dr. Martin Luther King in January is a common practice that falls into this category. In this approach, culturally diverse books and issues are not specified as part of the curriculum (Banks, 1999).

The Additive Approach

In this approach content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its basic structure. This involves incorporating literature by and about people from diverse cultures into the mainstream curriculum without changing the curriculum. For example, examining the perspective of a Native American about Thanksgiving would be adding cultural diversity to the traditional view of Thanksgiving. However, this approach does not necessarily transform thinking (Banks, 1999).

The Transformation Approach

This approach actually changes the structure of the curriculum and encourages students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view. For example, a unit on Thanksgiving would become an entire unit exploring cultural conflict. This type of instruction involves critical thinking and involves a consideration of diversity as a basic premise (Banks, 1999).

The Social Action Approach

This approach combines the transformation approach with activities to strive for social change. Students are not only instructed to understand and question social issues, but to also do something about important about it. For example, after participating in a unit about recent immigrants to North America, students may write letters to senators, Congress, and newspaper editors to express their opinions about new policies (Banks, 1999).

Reference

Banks, J.A. (1999). *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.