We are living in a nation of unparalleled cultural diversity and differences relative to factors such as race, language, income, socioeconomic status (SES), and more. Current and projective demographic data indicate that racially and culturally different (RCD) students—African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American—represent an increasingly large proportion of the national and school population. In many U.S. cities, school districts, and school buildings, these “minority” groups are actually the numerical majority.¹ Given ever-changing demographics, issues of culture, difference, and conflict must be addressed in discussions, theories, research, and prevention and intervention efforts among educators.

According to the Condition of Education (Aud et al., 2013; Kena et al., 2014), the racial distribution of public-school students enrolled in grades P-12 is consistently changing. To illustrate, from 1988 to 2011, the percentage of White students in U.S. public schools decreased from 68% to 52%; in contrast, Hispanic enrollment doubled, from 11% to 22%. Black students’ enrollment decreased slightly, from 17% to 16%. Projections for 2020 are that non-White students will comprise over half of all public-school students.

Note that changes in student demographics are not matched by changes in teacher or school personnel demographics relative to race (and gender). According to the Condition of Education (Aud et al., 2013; Kena et al., 2014), the majority (85%) of teachers are White; 75% of teachers are women. Undeniably, the demographic gap between school professionals and students contributes to the achievement gap, with some explanations grounded in cultural clashes (Banks, 2010; Ford, 2013a, 2013b; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006, 2009). Clashes exist when the values, beliefs, customs, and traditions of racial and cultural groups are dissimilar and/or in opposition. In the sections below, I present an overview of key theories, models, and paradigms that center on how cultures are out of sync in schools for the aforementioned two student groups. This discussion begins with theories and conceptions of culture, cultural differences, and cultural conflict based on the works of John Ogbu (regarding voluntary and involuntary minorities) and A. Wade Boykin (regarding characteristics of African American culture). Later sections focus on racial identity using the scholarship of William Cross, Jr.

African American/Black Students

In education discourse, laws, reforms, and policies on “minority” students, African Americans have received the greatest attention compared to other non-White students and groups for at least two reasons: (a) because they have been the largest “minority” in U.S. history until the last decade; and (b) because they are experiencing the least amount of school success—high dropout rates, low graduation rates, low test scores, high suspension rates, high enrollment in special education, and low enrollment in gifted and advanced classes. The outcomes are especially negative for African Americans, as witnessed by their experiencing the least amount of success in many school settings (Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Losen & Martinez, 2013; see also various Schott Foundation reports, such as The Urgency of Now, 2012). Given this specific educational crisis, two federal initiatives have been created in the United States: (a) the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans (http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/whieeaa/); and (b) My Brother’s Keeper, which seeks to recruit some 80,000 African American male teachers (http://www.whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper). Evident in these works is that race and culture matter, and that far too many African American students are not faring well in our nation’s schools, but can do better when prevention and intervention are targeted to their specific issues and needs.

Ogbu (1988, 1994; Ogbu & Davis, 2003) accurately noted that African Americans are the only RCD group to come to...
the United States in chains and shackles; they are the only group denied the legal right to an education for centuries. Many other RCD groups have come by choice; that is, in search of the proverbial American dream and/or to escape from horrific and oppressive conditions in their nation. They are immigrants and “voluntary minorities.” This is not the case for African Americans—descendants of slaves who are the largest “involuntary” minority group in the United States.

Given academic and social data, the American dream has been elusive for far too many. The ways in which African Americans experience education is not similar to the way of other culturally different groups in our schools and nation. The vestiges of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation continue to influence such students socially and educationally, contributing in meaningful ways to the achievement gap, overrepresentation in special education, overreferrals for suspensions, and underrepresentation in gifted education and classes for advanced learners. To be effective with such students, educational psychologists have come to grasp the importance of studying the historical and contemporary lives of their students. They seek to understand who African Americans are as individuals and as a group.

Culture matters in teaching, learning, and assessment. As will be discussed later, the beliefs, attitudes, values, customs, and traditions of a people affect their school experiences and how educational psychologists work with them. As the United States continues being a nation of immigrants, it behooves educators from all disciplines to avoid disregarding or neglecting their culture and cultural differences, which can result in cultural clashes and contribute to students’ underachievement and professional burnout. For instance, numerous reports and studies indicate that, in urban schools, educator turnover is high, with educators (especially classroom teachers) leaving the profession within 2–5 years (e.g., Barton & Coley, 2009). If culture were insignificant, there would be fewer misunderstandings and better outcomes for such students and educators.

Worth noting is that when educators learn that their students are Hispanic or Asian, they appear to recognize that culture will be at work; not so, it seems with African Americans (Ford, 2011). As an illustration, when Americans travel to Mexico or another Hispanic country, they cannot deny that their experiences and encounters will involve cultural differences. In this case, educators in another culture are vulnerable and may experience cultural shock, as noted by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), Oberg (1960), and Storti (2007). Likewise, when Hispanic students are enrolled in classes in the United States, cultural differences and clashes will exist. The impact of culture is significant, regardless of whether educators are traveling abroad or when students are under their charge in U.S. schools. To repeat, when the students are immigrants or the focus is on international students, educators seem to understand and are more willing to accommodate cultural differences. However, when the students are neither immigrants nor international, such accommodations appear to be tempered and cultural differences are discounted or trivialized, which has been found with Black students (e.g., Ogbru, 1988). Blacks are not immigrants; they are not recent immigrants or new to the United States, which can and does result in the misguided mindset that they do not have a culture that is unique and/or influences what happens in schools. This may be one reason—and a significant one—for their generally poor educational outcomes compared to other RCD groups.

Like all racial groups, African Americans have a culture with subcultures based on such variables as gender, region, age, income, SES, and education. As Boykin and colleagues (Boykin, Tyler, & Miller, 2005; Boykin, Tyler, Watkins-Lewis, & Kizzie, 2006) explained and as summarized by Ford (2011) and Ford and Kea (2009), spirituality, affect, harmony, movement, verve, orality, expressive individualism/creativity, polychronicity, and communalism are a few noteworthy characteristics of Black culture (Table 27.1). As with any RCD group, we need to rely on generalizations rather than stereotypes for understanding, and to guide prevention and intervention designed to improve their educational outcomes. The characteristics listed in Table 27.1 by no means suggest that all African Americans have these qualities or characteristics. Instead, the point is that there are some fundamental features of Black culture that educators, including educational psychologists, should understand and consider when working to be culturally responsive in their practice and when building relationships with such students, families, communities, and groups.

Black students are often communal or socially oriented; this is defined as a collective and interdependent identity more than an individualistic and independent one. Communalism is also reflected in fictive kinship networks and extended families (e.g., Boykin et al., 2005; Ford, 2011; Hale, 1983, 2001; McAdoo, 2006; Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 2001). The desire for social acceptance, belonging, affiliation, and bonding with others who share similar concerns, needs, and interests is strong. Communal support is a mechanism for individual and group preservation, as well as social identity. However, group identity can be an important source of vulnerability for Black students. For instance, for a number of historical and contemporary reasons related to racism and associated discrimination, African American students may develop an oppositional social identity (Ogbru, 1988, 1994; Ogbru & Davis, 2003) in which they consciously underperform in school to avoid being identified or affiliated with Whites—the group deemed to be their oppressors (Ford, 2010; Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008), rebel against school and social authority figures who are perceived as racist and oppressive, and rail against any behavior associated with mainstream society—known as “acting White.” All students confront negative peer pressures, and educational psychologists are frequently called upon to design prevention and intervention programs. Increasingly, it is being recognized that such efforts must be culturally responsive rather than color-blind and they should be tailored to each student group (Gay, 2010; Irvine, 1991, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

To protect their image (i.e., self-esteem, self-concept, and/or racial identity), some African American students
Table 27.1 Afro-centric cultural qualities: An overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>• Belief that a non-material, religious force/spirit influences people’s everyday lives; acceptance of a non-material higher force that pervades all of life’s affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• External locus of control: “God willing …”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Faithful; optimistic; resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Intuitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>• Environment, nature, and context are important; the notion that one’s fate is interrelated with other elements in the scheme of things so that humankind and nature are harmonically conjoined; harmony—one’s functioning is tightly linked to nature’s order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relationships matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• External locus of control—nature/supernatural rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Observant/perceptive: Reads the environment well; reads non-verbal behaviors well, including inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keen sense of justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>• An emphasis on movement, rhythm, music, and dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tactile and kinesthetic; a need to move, to be involved, to be active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expresses self well non-verbally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verve</td>
<td>• A propensity for relatively high levels of stimulation; physical overexcitability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Energetic and lively; has vitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrative and animated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tactile; kinesthetic; physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>• An emphasis on emotions and feelings; strong emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sensitivity to emotional cues and a tendency to be emotionally responsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keen sense of justice, right and wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Realness—faces life without pretense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transparent—shows and tells emotions, feelings, thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>• Creative, innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individualism</td>
<td>• Seeks and cultivates a distinctive personality and style; unique personal expression, personal style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orality/oral tradition</td>
<td>• A preference for oral modes of communication—speaking and listening are treated as performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Call and response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Digression (“off topic,” circular, non-linear)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Oral virtuosity—uses metaphorically colorful, graphic forms of spoken language (e.g., slang; storytelling, embellishments, jokes, metaphors); idiomatic expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Direct, forthright, blunt, “tells it like it is”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communalism</td>
<td>• Social orientation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A commitment to social connectedness—social bonds and responsibilities transcend individual privileges and obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A commitment to the fundamental interdependence/co-dependence of people and to the importance of social bonds and relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A strong need for affiliation and social acceptance/approval; social; extraverted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interdependent; collective worldview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group identity; group duty and sharing often more important than individual wants and needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social time perspective</td>
<td>• Quality view of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polychronic</td>
<td>• Time is circular, social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Time is not a commodity; time is not the master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The event is more important than the time; flexibility is valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Present-oriented; the here and now is what exists (the future is not guaranteed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Multitasking is being efficient and making the most of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Ford (2011), based on the works of A. Wade Boykin and colleagues (e.g., 2006). Although some of these qualities may appear to be consistent with stereotyped views of this cultural group, Boykin has evidence to support this list.

develop ineffective and unproductive coping styles that further alienate them from school and, thus, can hinder their academic success. Far too many Black students play down and hide their academic abilities by becoming class clowns and not enrolling in or taking advantage of gifted and advanced placement classes (Ford, 2010; Ford et al., 2008; Weiss, Kreider, Lopez, & Chatman-Nelson, 2010). One hypothesis is that these African American students may have a diffused identity, depicted by negative racial identity and low racial salience. This can result in educational, social, and psychological adjustment problems. This identity most likely develops when the values, attitudes, and behaviors promoted in the home and school are incongruent or incompatible, resulting in barriers to African American students’ academic success. This said, there is also ample and growing evidence that healthy or positive Black identity correlates favorably with motivation and academic achievement in African American students (Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998; Sellers, Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006). These works support the need for educational psychologists to be familiar with racial identity models and theories for their RCD students.

Hispanic American/Latino Students

Hispanic Americans or Latinos are the fastest-growing RCD group in the United States. They are the largest linguistically different group, representing about one-fourth of the nation’s
school-age population (Aud et al., 2013; Kena et al., 2014). The largest Hispanic subgroup in U.S. schools is Mexican (over 60%), and those who are undocumented are experiencing poor school outcomes at high rates.

Hispanic American students, in particular Mexicans, are confronted by high poverty and unemployment rates, and negative educational outcomes. Dropout rates are alarming—almost half leave school without a degree (Batalova & Fix, 2011; Kena et al., 2014; see http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/25/nyregion/mexicans-in-new-york-city-lag-in-education.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0). Language is a major barrier, as many do not speak English as their first or primary language; this is compounded by educators’ beliefs and controversy regarding foreign languages, bilingual education, and English-only policies in some states and schools. When language supports are not valued and provided, these students are unlikely to be successful (Shade et al., 2001; Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2008).

Educational prevention and interventions for Hispanic American students mainly pertain to language acquisition programs—bilingual education, Spanish immersion, English as a second language, or limited English proficiency. (For an overview of bilingual education, see National Association for Bilingual Education at http://www.nabe.org/BilingualEducation). The focus is understandably on students adopting English; however, students also would benefit if programs targeted educational professionals who are bilingual and/or culturally responsive to support such students. Educational psychologists can be more effective with Hispanic students when they recognize verbal strengths in such students and are responsive to their cultural and linguistic issues and needs.

Generally speaking, when it comes to culture, Hispanic Americans value non-material possessions, family bonds, concrete and real-world learning experiences, social and cooperative learning, student-centered classrooms, and active learning experiences (Shade et al., 2001; Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2008). Overall and with an acknowledgment of within-group differences, many Hispanics are united by customs, language, religion, and values; yet, they are also heterogeneous (e.g., Hofstede et al., 2010). Similarities and differences exist among Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and all other subgroups. Educational psychologists who are culturally competent have the potential to support such students through targeted programs and interventions. This does not mean speaking the language; rather, it means understanding, respecting, valuing, and being responsive to this racial and cultural group and subgroups.

One characteristic that is of paramount importance in many Hispanic cultures (and subcultures) is family commitment, which involves loyalty, a strong support system, a belief that a child’s behavior reflects on the honor of the family, and a duty to care for family members. This strong sense of other-directedness conflicts with the U.S. mainstream emphasis and value on individualism (Hofstede, 1984, 1991; Hofstede et al., 2010; Shade et al., 2001; Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2008). In general, Hispanic cultures promote and value interdependence and cooperation in the attainment of goals.

This focus on collective identity can result in students’ discomfort when there is individualistic competition in classes. The individual rather than group-oriented philosophy and ways of being contribute to negative school performance and outcomes, depicted by the White–Hispanic achievement gap (see Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2008 and http://www.education.com/reference/article/Ref_Hispanic_American/, The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (retrieved from http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/hispanic-initiative/)).

As was noted with Black students, it is important that educational psychologists become familiar with the culture and subcultures of their Hispanic American students, and plan prevention and intervention activities and strategies in culturally responsive ways. Being a color-blind professional seems counterproductive and may result in programs and strategies that are ineffective.

Achievement Gaps: African American and Hispanic American Students

Several terms have been adopted to describe or articulate the comparative and differential performance of African American and Hispanic American students compared to White students in school settings. The term “achievement gap” covers a broad range of terms on this issue—rigor gap, expectation gap, opportunity gap, resource gap, funding gap, teacher quality gap, performance gap, cultural gap, and more—but they share the reality that both African American and Hispanic American students seldom fare as well as White students in P-12 and higher education settings.

At least 16 correlates clustered into three contexts contribute significantly to the different outcomes of students (Barton & Coley, 2009), as indicated in Table 27.2. Explanations for and contributing factors to the achievement gap are multifaceted and complex; the gap starts at home and then increases during the formal school years. At the kindergarten level, there is a 1-year gap between Black and White students and between Hispanic Americans and Whites; however, by the 12th grade, there is a 4-year gap (e.g., Barton & Coley, 2009; Chatterji, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Reardon & Galindo, 2009). Given that the gap widens while CRD students are in school, we cannot place the blame solely on families and educators cannot be held blameless and unaccountable.

A focus on achievement, including the achievement gap, is incomplete without also discussing the overrepresentation of African American and Hispanic students in special education and among suspensions and expulsions (e.g., Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Losen & Martinez, 2013). It is also incomplete without attention to their underrepresentation in gifted education and advanced placement classes (College Board, 2014; Ford, 2013b; U.S. Department of Education, 2009, 2013). Black students, mostly males, are two to three times more likely than White students to be represented in high-incidence areas of special education—emotional and behavioral disorders, learning disability, intellectual disabilities, and developmental delay. The suspension rates are equally dismal. A report released in March 2014 by the U.S.
Table 27.2 Achievement gap correlates: School, home, and health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School correlates</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rigor (e.g., low expectations, lack of access to rigorous courses and programs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teacher preparation (e.g., low/poor-quality teachers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teacher experience (e.g., novice teachers, those with fewer than 5 years of teaching experience)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teacher absence/turnover (e.g., many substitute teachers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Class size (e.g., larger class sizes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Instructional technology (e.g., little or inadequate use of technology to augment instruction)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Fear and safety (e.g., negative peer pressure, gangs, violence in school)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home correlates</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Parent involvement (e.g., little involvement in school settings)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Parent–student ratio (e.g., single-parent homes; larger families)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading and talking to children (e.g., little talking and reading with children)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Excessive TV watching (e.g., too much time spent with media)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Changing schools (e.g., results in playing catch-up and keep-up; transition issues)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Summer loss (e.g., little or no focus on academics)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health correlates</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hunger and nutrition (e.g., more prone to food insecurity due to higher rates of poverty)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Low birth weight (e.g., inadequate health care, poor prenatal care; contributes to developmental delays and health issues)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Environmental damage (e.g., lead poisoning, mercury poisoning as a function of living in older homes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Barton and Coley (2009).

Department of Education indicated that the national average for suspensions among Black males was 20%—compared to 6% for Whites and 9% for Hispanics. Nationally, 12% of Black girls were suspended, compared to 2% of White girls and 4% of Hispanic girls (retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/2014/mar/21/school-suspension-rates-higher-for-black-boys/). This is not new data. In 2012, although Black students made up only 18% of those enrolled in the schools sampled, they accounted for 35% of those suspended once, 46% of those suspended more than once, and 39% of all expulsions, according to the Civil Rights Data Collection’s 2009–2010 statistics from 72,000 schools in 7,000 districts, serving about 85% of the nation’s students. The data covered students from kindergarten age through high school (retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/06/education/black-students-face-more-harsh-discipline-data-shows.html).

Conversely, and just as troubling, African American and Hispanic students are poorly represented in gifted and advanced placement classes, with about 50% underrepresentation for African American students and almost 40% for Hispanic American students (U.S. Dept. of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2013). Specifically, Black students represent 19% of public schools but 10% of gifted programs. Hispanic American students comprise 25% of gifted education but 16% of gifted programs.

Overrepresentation and underrepresentation in the two aforementioned programs share the problem of deficit thinking (e.g., stereotypes, biases, prejudices) by educators. Deficit thinking (Valencia, 2010) results in unnecessary referrals to special education and for suspensions and expulsions, and contributes to underreferral for gifted education screening (Ford, 2013a, 2013b; Ford et al., 2008). Deficit thinking contributes to gifted education underrepresentation and special education overrepresentation; both representation issues are a clarion call for educational psychologists to be culturally competent.

Racial Identity Considerations

To further understand the educational performance of Black and Hispanic American students, a discussion of psychological development is in order. This section focuses on racial identity, using a research-based model by William Cross Jr. (See Ponterotto and Pedersen (2003), Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, and Alexander (2001), and Marks, Settles, Cooke, Morgan, and Sellers (2004) for several other racial identity models that are useful in guiding educational psychologists in their work to effect changes that improve the achievement and educational outcomes of Black and Hispanic American students).

No one is born with a racial identity. Instead, racial identity is learned. Self-perception, self-image, and identity play significant roles in school achievement and behavior. However, traditional theories of self-related constructs seldom include racial identity as a component, despite the reality that race is central to the sense of self of many RCD groups (Cross, 1991, 1995; Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Unfortunately, and undeniably, RCD students confront issues of race, such as stereotypes, discrimination, and racial microaggressions, on a consistent basis (Sue, 2010), which affects their identity. Self-perception and pride are lifelong developmental processes that begin with a healthy sense of one’s own racial identity.

Racial identity concerns one’s self-perceptions and values regarding race, especially salience and valence, as described in the many studies by Robert Sellers and colleagues. For example, when racial salience and valence are high, students tend to have racial pride. Racial identity theories exist for Whites and three major RCD groups—Asian, African American, and Hispanic, as well as biracial students. Space limitations prohibit a detailed discussion of each theory. Several racial identity models and theories appear in Ponterotto and Pedersen (2003; Ponterotto et al., 2001) for White students and RCD groups (and subgroups). To repeat, research supporting these models appears in Ponterotto et al.’s handbook (2001), and a chapter by Marks et al. (2004).

Black racial identity. In Cross’ revised model of Black racial identity, Cross and Vandiver (2001) and Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, Cokley, Cross, and Worrell (2001) describe how African Americans progress and regress in the process of becoming Afro-centric where racial identity and pride are positive and have high salience. This model has been modified several times due to extensive studies by Cross and colleagues, along with other scholars who have conducted studies using the Cross Racial Identity Scale (see Cross &
when Nigrescence Theory is applied to the study of Black identity change, the categories Pre-Encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, and Internalization-Commitment are viewed as stages. However, when the focus is on the socialization experiences, covering infancy through early adulthood, that result in the production of exemplars . . . then the exemplars are viewed as bounded and fairly stable identity or distinctive reference group orientations. (p. 375)

According to the model, African American students in stage 1 (pre-encounter) hold one of at least three attitudes toward race: (a) low racial salience attitudes; (b) social stigma attitudes; and (c) anti-Black attitudes. Those holding a low-salience attitude do not deny being physically Black, but they consider their Blackness as having an insignificant role in their daily lives, their well-being, or how they define themselves (Figure 27.1). Students with an assimilation identity have low racial salience. Their primary identity is as an American rather than African American. Blacks who have a stereotype or miseducation identity disidentify as Black, perhaps due to shame associated with stereotypes of other Blacks. Those who express self-hatred personify an even more extreme disregard for their racial status. Being White is preferred and desired.

These Black students seldom give much thought to race issues, and appear unaware of problems associated with prejudice and discrimination. Overall, pre-encounter students view themselves as “human beings who just happen to be Black” (Cross & Vandiver, 2001, p. 98). By default, in this stage 1, race is attributed some significance, in a neutral or negative sense. Anti-Black attitudes represent the most extreme type of pre-encounter identity, as such students see their racial status as negative, feel alienated from other Blacks and family, and do not value the Black community as a resource.

All three pre-encounter types (assimilation, stereotypes/miseducation, and self-hatred) favor European cultural perspectives of beauty, literature, the arts, communication styles, work ethic (e.g., American dream), and so on. In all cases, being supportive of other Blacks is not likely.

Based on encounters (e.g., racial prejudice and discrimination, microaggressions), Blacks experience an “identity metamorphosis” (Cross & Vandiver, 2001, p. 104); this significant event (or series of events) induces cognitive dissonance. These events, either positive or negative and either direct or indirect, strip away at pre-encounter attitudes and push African American students toward increased awareness of their status as racial beings. The encounter or encounters (e.g., microaggressions: see Sue, 2010; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008) result in significant emotional changes—guilt, anger, rage, stress, and/or anxiety—for having trivialized, discounted, or denied the significance of race and associated inequities.

Stage 2 (immersion-emersion) is the “vortex of psychological Nigrescence” in which African American students discard their raceless, low racial salience, or pre-encounter identity and begin to construct a different and more salient frame of reference. Immersion-emersion is characterized by anxiety, particularly relative to becoming the proper or “right kind of Black person” (Cross, 1995, p. 106). The two identity subtypes are intense Black involvement and anti-White attitudes (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Whites are now perceived as oppressive, racist, and inhumane. African Americans immerse themselves in a world of Blackness. For instance, they attend political or cultural meetings that focus on Black issues grounded in justice and equity.
African American students now accept themselves as racial beings. Common themes include dedication and commitment to the Black community and causes grounded in social and racial justice. When extreme, immersed African American students have difficulty controlling the impulse or desire to confront racism, even when their life is at stake. In the emersion phase, there is a marked decline in racist and emotional attitudes by African American students. This leveling off occurs when African American students encounter a mentor or role model, for instance, who emulates racial pride and salience, along with resilience in the face of oppression.

The last stage (internalization) represents the integration of a new identity characterized by healthy racial pride and high racial salience. There are three possible identity subtypes—nationalism, biculturalism, or multiculturalism. An internalized identity serves several functions: (a) to defend and protect African American students from psychological and racial problems; (b) to provide a sense of belonging and social affiliation; and (c) to provide a basis for interacting and communicating with people, cultures, and situations beyond being Black (Cross, 1995). It is important to note that internalization is change- or action-oriented, with a focus on change, equity, and being proactive at addressing social ills. Internalization represents self-advocacy and advocacy for those who are oppressed by income, gender, and perhaps other variables. Internalized African American students devote time and energy to discovering strategies and resources to translate their personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action—a commitment to Black affairs and improving the circumstances of African Americans and other disenfranchised groups (e.g., other RCD groups, groups who live in poverty).

Cross (1995) and Cross and Vandiver (2001) acknowledged that African Americans may regress or be stagnant in a stage or an identity type. This depends on their personality, support base, resources, and experiences at home, in school, in their communities and other contexts. For example, one can face encounters as an adolescent in school settings, have an immersion-emersion identity, and then get solid mentoring and become internalized. Years later as a college student or adult, this same individual can face encounters that increase anger and rage, which may result in regressing to immersion-emersion.

It is essential that African American and Latino students are not homogenized as racial beings. That is, racial identity is similar and different for all RCD students. Latinos or Hispanic Americans generally hold a fundamentally different view of race. Many state that they are too racially mixed to settle on one of the government-sanctioned racial categories—white, black, American Indian, Alaska native, native Hawaiian, and a collection of Asian and Pacific Island backgrounds.


Hence, over 18 million Hispanic Americans checked the “other” box in the 2010 census—an indicator of the sharp disconnect between how Hispanics/Latinos view themselves and how the government and others want to count and categorize them. Many Hispanic Americans/Latinos argue that the country’s race categories—indeed, the government’s very conception of identity—“do not fit them” (retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/04/when-labels-dont-fit-hispanics-and-their-views-of-identity/).

Due to space limitations, all models of racial identity cannot be described here. Arce (1981) focused specifically on Chicano racial identity, with the stipulation that having a healthy racial identity for this RCD group involves: (a) cultural awareness; and (b) political awareness. Cultural awareness represents increased pride in Hispanic Americans’ language, heritage, and cultural values. Political awareness represents the knowledge of their history in the United States, along with an awareness of the impact of discrimination or prejudice on this RCD population.

Unlike Cross (1995) and Cross and Vandiver (2001), Arce (1981) does not name stages in his racial identity development model for Chicanos. Nonetheless, the transitional descriptions are consistent with and somewhat aligned with other theories of racial identity. Ponterotto and Pedersen (2003) noted that the generic racial identity stages could be classified as: (a) forced identification; (b) internal quest; (c) acceptance; and (d) internalized racial/ethnic identity. During forced identification, Hispanic American students are identified by the general terms “Latino” or “Mexican American” by others. Those Latinos who adopt this imposed identity learn that it promotes a search for their cultural heritage—a quest for self-understanding relative to racial or ethnic identity (stage 2). This search leads to an acceptance of their group, and contributes to increased pride and commitment (stage 3). In the final stage, Hispanics (Latinos) develop a deeper, more substantive sense of affiliation and belonging to their group, and a desire to contribute to the group’s overall well-being.

As all of these theories attest, becoming proud of one’s culture as an RCD student does not happen in a vacuum, by accident, or without intent. Deliberate efforts by the students themselves and their peers, family, community, and schools provide opportunities for pride to develop. This is where a culturally responsive education comes into play.

**Culturally Responsive Education for Racially and Culturally Different Students**

Decades ago, the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (1973) recognized that effective implementation of multicultural education has four foundational goals:

a. teaching values that support cultural diversity and differences, as well as individual uniqueness and differences;

b. promoting the qualitative expansion of existing cultures and their incorporation into the mainstream of American socioeconomic, cultural, and political life;

c. examining alternative and emerging lifestyles; and

d. fostering a philosophy of cultural responsiveness and equity.
However, there is too little consideration given to the cultural heritage that culturally different students—Black and Hispanic students—bring to classrooms and learning environments. Educational psychologists cannot conduct their work effectively absent of a clear definition of multicultural or culturally responsive education. Banks and Banks (1993) defined multicultural education as:

an educational reform movement designed to change the total educational environment so that students from racial and ethnic groups, both gender groups, exceptional students, and students from each social-class group will experience equal educational opportunities in schools, colleges and universities. (p. 359)

Culturally responsive education contributes to the psychological, social, affective/emotional, intellectual, and educational well-being of not only RCD students, but White students as well. Every student can benefit from an education that is culturally responsive (Banks, 1993, 2010; Ford, 2011; Gay, 2010; Shade et al., 2001; Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2008). Education is polemic and culturally assaultive when it caters to and capitalizes on the culture of White students more than other students (Ford, 2011). Too often, all students are given a homogenized curriculum and interventions that best meet the cultural, academic, intellectual, and affective/social-emotional interests and needs of White students, especially those in upper-income and SES groups. In this type of curriculum, African American and Hispanic American students can be marginalized, ignored, trivialized, or negated. This treatment of cultural diversity and difference(s) frequently affirms White students while undervaluing others. Likewise, homogenization espouses a color-blind or “culture-blind” philosophy, which is also offensive to RCD students. The result is that RCD students are denied opportunities to be valued and respected as RCD beings in schools (and the larger society). When educators seek to be color-blind, often as an ideal, equity is likened to equality and sameness; however, students are different in so many important ways that matter in educational settings. Therefore, in the process of seeking to achieve color-blindness/culture-blindness, educational psychologists risk negating, minimizing, or trivializing the richness and reality of diversity and differences (e.g., Steele, 2010; Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2008).

Self-reflection among educational psychologists seems essential for change and progress. Why do all students need an education that is responsive in general and culturally responsive in particular? Why is this education essential for White and Hispanic and Black students? What is a culturally responsive education and what components are most vital? When is a culturally responsive education necessary? How can educators implement multicultural (culturally responsive) education so that it is an integral and integrated aspect of the educational process? Ford and Whiting (2008) share standards addressing students on the need for and their journey to becoming culturally competent students:

a. Engage responsibly in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community. Culturally competent students assume responsibility for their role in sustaining the well-being of the cultural community and they demonstrate a lifelong commitment as community members and benefactors.

b. Build on the knowledge and skills of their cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success on a long-term basis. Culturally competent students demonstrate a capacity for and interest in learning about other cultures without diminishing personal integrity within their own and other cultures. They make effective use of their own cultural knowledge and skills to learn about the global world.

c. Participate actively and consistently in cultural environments. They feel confident and comfortable in other cultural settings and with people whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Such students adapt to different environments and see the myriad of advantages in being actively engaged in different cultural environments.

d. Engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning. Culturally competent students identify and use appropriate sources of cultural knowledge to find solutions to everyday problems; they engage in realistic self-assessment to identify strengths and needs to maximize learning.

e. Demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the community and world around them. Culturally competent students view their community and the world holistically, recognizing interdependence; they recognize how and why cultures change over time, and anticipate the challenges and changes that occur when different cultures come into contact. Culturally competent students discern the influence of cultural values and beliefs on interactions among people from different cultural backgrounds and contexts (Ford & Whiting, 2008).

As described next, educational psychologists benefit from becoming culturally aware, knowledgeable, skilled, and responsive. Cultural competence is a personal and professional survival skill.

**Instructional Models**

Integrating culturally responsive education in schools and practice is a personal and professional commitment that becomes a reality with time, effort, persistence, and efficacy. Increased racial diversity among school personnel, modifications in curriculum and instruction, and philosophical changes can be implemented more effectively (that is, equitably) when educational psychologists are trained to be culturally competent. This will help them to enhance their work on individual differences relative to intelligence, cognitive development, affect, motivation, and self-concept and racial identity, as well as their role in learning, achievement, as assessment. Accordingly, such professionals will be more culturally inclusive in instructional design, educational technology, curriculum development, organizational learning, gifted education, special education, and classroom management.

Culturally competent educators are better equipped to identify and support strengths rather than weaknesses in RCD students. They have the following core characteristics: self-awareness and self-understanding; cultural awareness and understanding; social responsiveness and responsibility; and culturally sensitive techniques and strategies (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009).
Self-awareness and self-understanding. Culturally competent educators seek out and have greater self-awareness and understanding of their own biases, assumptions, and stereotypes. This comes from self-reflection—understanding our own cultural values and norms, and understanding how we all are a product of our experiences—specifically, culture. Such introspection helps educators to recognize how assumptions and biases influence their teaching and relationships with RCD individuals and groups (e.g., Ford, 2013a; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Storti, 2007).

Cultural awareness and understanding. Culturally competent educators understand, respect, and value the worldviews (e.g., values and norms) of RCD students. They do not harbor negative judgments, stereotypical judgments, and/or pre-judgments. Educators do not have to adopt the culture of their RCD students; instead, they respect that cultures are different and legitimate rather than substandard and trivial to the educational process. Through such reflection or looking inward, educational psychologists are better equipped to become more informed about how attitudes and beliefs influence teaching, learning, and assessment—all three influence their work and the way they relate to students and their families.

Culturally competent educators increase cultural awareness, understanding, and pride among all students. They adopt culturally responsive education, even in racially homogeneous settings (e.g., predominantly or all-White classrooms, schools, and communities). The absence of RCD students in such contexts is not used as an excuse to continue business as usual. Such educators are activists who seek positive changes on behalf of RCD students. As advocates, these school professionals seek equity in all areas of the educational process; they address inequities in instruction, materials, instruments, assessment, policies, and so forth by challenging barriers in school settings that hinder the educational outcomes of Black and Hispanic students.

Cooperative learning. Cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1994) is essential for Hispanic and African American students relative to building a sense of community and addressing culturally based ways of learning (Schul, 2012; Shade et al., 2001; Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2008). Educators must utilize a variety of cooperative learning techniques, relying less on competitive strategies. This strategy capitalizes on the cultural styles and preferences of RCD students to increase their achievement, engagement, and sense of belonging. Cooperative learning is a connection to how both groups tend to be reared at home—interdependence, social, family, and community are valued—with a decreased focus on individual competition. It is also important to recall components of Table 27.1 regarding the individual–collective continuum.

Cooperative learning holds promise for helping RCD students to feel more comfortable as they relate to and work with White classmates and educators. There is comfort when group identity is nurtured, as Hispanic and African American students can express themselves as a group or family (i.e., communal, collective, and interdependent) rather than individually (competitive). Cooperative learning makes Hispanic American and African American students interdependent, yet individually accountable. The two need not be mutually exclusive.

Perspectives about time. Notions of time are studied often in works on culture (e.g., Hofstede et al., 2010). In most countries and cultures outside of the United States, time is polychronic rather than monochronic (e.g., Cohen, 2004; Luximon & Goonetilleke, 2010; and various works by Hofstede, 1984, 1991). A monochronic time system means that things and tasks are done one at a time and time is segmented into precise, small units. Under this system, time is scheduled, arranged, and managed by the clock in a literal way. However, when polychronic is the orientation, the event takes precedence over the hour; time is circular; time is unlimited. Educators would benefit from becoming familiar with different views about the concept of time, how they use time, and then transition African American and Hispanic American students into deadlines and class activities that require different time-frames and deadlines, and that have a different view of how time should be spent.

Students who are polychronic may not fare well in schools that are unforgiving and uncompromising by being wedded to a monochronic conception of time (Cohen, 2004; Hofstede, 1984, 1991; Luximon & Goonetilleke, 2010). Direct teaching/instruction regarding time management and organization is important. Concrete and real-world examples (such as being on time for a flight and work) for why being monochronic in U.S. school is a win–win is essential. This is not to say that deadlines are foreign to African American and Latino students; rather, the point is that time is perceived and spent differently across cultures and this can affect learning and teaching, even in U.S. classrooms.

Communication style. Whereas African American students tend to be direct about their views and can come across as blunt or rude, Hispanic students tend to be less direct and can come across as shy or lacking in self-confidence. Hispanic students tend to view the educational process as hierarchical, with teachers as the authority figure. Thus, some will not voluntarily talk in class, ask questions, admit to confusion, or ask for help (Ford, 2011). Speaking one to one with students can facilitate conversation, honesty, and a sense of agency, particularly among males who may hold macho views.

However, African American students are likely to be rather direct or blunt in their comments and views (see Boykin et al., 2005a, 2005b, 2006, and Table 27.1). Yet, African American males may be reserved when it comes to asking for help and support from teachers (e.g., Whiting, 2006). Hence, asking for help may be viewed as a sign of weakness and vulnerability, even more so among Black males. Many will prefer directives, specifics, and structure—leaving little room for confusion about teacher expectations on assignments. This is not to say that student choice must be eliminated; rather, that structure, clarity, and consistency are...
culturally responsive strategies that support these two groups of students, especially African American males.

**Multicultural Curriculum**

Several studies and reports with African American and Hispanic students indicate that too many find the traditional curriculum irrelevant, thus contributing to disengagement and lower achievement, including the achievement gap. Although multicultural education is a commonly used concept, and is widely espoused in schools, the degree and quality of its implementation vary widely, and this variation has been attributed to inadequate training to ensure quality and integrity. Banks (1993, 1994, 1997, 2006, 2010) and Banks and Banks (1993, 2010) described four levels of integration of multicultural content into the curriculum (Figure 27.2).

In Level 1, the contributions approach, educators focus extensively, if not exclusively, on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements and artifacts. According to Banks (1993, 2010) and Ford (2011), this is the most frequently adopted approach to multiculturalism in schools. A central feature of this approach is that the traditional, ethnocentric curriculum remains unchanged in its basic structure, goals, and salient characteristics. Cultural traditions—folklore, food, fashion, fun (e.g., music and dance)—may be discussed, but insufficient attention is given to their meaning and significance to RCD groups and the larger U.S. context. Why do RCD groups celebrate alternative holidays and celebrations, or celebrate them in different ways (e.g., birthdays, childbirth, rites of passage, New Year’s Eve, weddings, funerals/home goings)? These questions would not be raised or addressed at this level. As a result, students arguably learn little to nothing about the occasion, group, or individuals being celebrated. The contributions approach is cosmetic, superficial, and ancillary to the curriculum; it provides teachers with a quick, non-threatening way to “integrate” the curriculum, and teachers themselves can adopt this approach without knowing much about RCD groups. It also reinforces stereotypes about RCD students and groups by using safe, non-threatening heroes found acceptable to the mainstream (Ford, 2011).

In the additive approach (Level 2), the content, concepts, themes, and perspectives of RCD groups are added to the curriculum without changing its fundamental structure. That is, teachers may add a book, unit, or course that focuses on RCD groups, issues, or topics. While the content changes slightly, there is little restructuring of the curriculum relative to purposes and characteristics. RCD students learn little of their own history, and White students learn little of the history and contributions of other racial and cultural groups.

---

**Figure 27.2** Overview of Banks’ four levels of integrating multicultural content in the curriculum.

Adapted from Banks (2010) and Ford (2011).
in and to American society. The additive approach fails to help students view society from different perspectives and to understand how the histories of racial, cultural, economic, and religious groups are interconnected (Banks & Banks, 1993, 2010). This superficial approach requires little time, preparation, effort, training, and rethinking of curriculum and instruction. Students are actually mis-educated if they are led to believe that the U.S. is postracial (i.e., that racism and related injustices do not exist in contemporary America).

In the third level, the transformational approach, at least two changes occur. First, the structure of the curriculum changes to empower students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of RCD groups and/or from more than one view. This is a fundamental change from the previous two levels due to changes in the basic assumptions, goals, nature, and structure of the curriculum. The second fundamental change is that students are provided with the knowledge, dispositions, and skills to better understand the perspectives of RCD groups (e.g., empathy and compassion). Essentially, students are informed, enlightened, and empowered. This approach requires extensive curriculum revision, along with changes in teacher preparation, teacher attitudes and philosophies, student thinking, and much time, effort, and commitment.

At the social action approach (Level 4), students make decisions about important social issues and take action to solve and resolve them. Students are not socialized to accept mainstream ideologies, values, practices, and institutions. Instead, students are educated to feel empowered and proactive; they are provided with the knowledge, dispositions, and skills necessary to participate in social change. Student self-examination becomes central in this approach through value analysis, as well as decision making, problem solving, and social action skills training. For example, students examine, discuss, and interrogate past and contemporary issues surrounding prejudice and discrimination, and they develop solutions to improve race relations. According to Banks (1993, 2006, 2010), this approach/level is the least likely to be adopted by educators, primarily because they lack formal training, experience, understanding, and personal knowledge of other racial and cultural groups (e.g., histories, values, beliefs, customs). Some may also lack interest and the desire to be culturally responsive. Reason aside, knowledge without action does not improve social and cultural relations and behavior.

It should be evident that, at the highest levels, authentic and rigorous multicultural education requires extensive attitudinal, philosophical, and curricular changes, undergirded by a personal and professional commitment to be culturally responsive. Rigorous multicultural education helps students to accept their culture as an integral component of their overall development without relegateing the culture of others to second-class status. Professional development/training is essential to ensure the integrity of Banks’ model/level and implementation at the highest two levels of transformation and social action.

By increasing their knowledge about cultural and racial diversity and differences, every teacher and student can acquire an ethic of equity and social justice—a sense of personal independence, social interdependence, personal responsibility, moral obligation, and social responsibility that can increase interest, motivation, and learning (Banks, 2006, 2010; Gay, 1993, 1997, 2002, 2010; Hale, 2001; Irvine, 2003).

Summary and Conclusion

Culturally competent educators seek to deliver a more effective education to African American and Hispanic students, an education that is relevant and appropriate to students’ interests and needs. This means adopting principles of learning that meet the academic, social-emotional, and psychological needs of RCD students, which is necessary to help close the documented achievement gaps.

Educators and educational psychologists who champion being culturally responsive create an education to achieve cultural pride, equity, and cultural congruency. This necessitates going beyond the subject matter to empower RCD students to value achievement (see Graham, 1994, for a seminal discussion) and to access social and cultural capital that benefits Whites, but is often elusive to so many Black and Hispanic students. Culturally competent educators who integrate the realities of students’ lives, experiences, and cultures into their classrooms and curricula, while affirming and validating students’ racial and cultural identities (Ladson-Billings, 2009), have the potential to close the various achievement gaps and inequities in school settings.

Several models of cultural competence exist to guide this process. To illustrate, consider the model from Mason (1993). Mason described six levels of cultural competence for individuals and organizations. The lowest level is cultural destructiveness, in which attitudes, policies, and practices hinder RCD individuals and groups. Also low is incapacity, whereby the educator and/or agency does not intentionally seek to be culturally assaultive; rather, the educator or agency lacks the skills or resources to work responsively with culturally different students. Blindness is also low. At this level, the educator and/or organization provide services with the objective of being unbiased. They function as if culture is insignificant. At a higher level is pre-competence, in which educators and organizations acknowledge cultural differences and make efforts to improve. The highest level, competence, is characterized by acceptance and respect of cultural differences, continued self-assessment, attention to the dynamics of cultural differences, and adoption of culturally relevant service models.

Storti (2007) shared a $2 \times 2$ typology based on competence and consciousness. Level 1 is called blissful ignorance (unconscious-incompetent). Here, individuals are not aware that cultural differences exist between themselves and another person or group. It does not occur to such individuals that they may be making cultural mistakes or perhaps misinterpreting much of the behavior going on around them. Level 2 is termed troubling ignorance (conscious-incompetent). Individuals realize that there are cultural differences between themselves and another person or group, but have little understanding about these differences. Individuals know there is a problem, but do not know the magnitude of
the conflicts. At this level, individuals are worried about whether they will ever figure out differences in others.

Storti labels the third level as spontaneous sensitivity (unconscious-competent). Here, individuals know there are cultural differences between people, they know some of the differences and attempt to modify their own behavior to be sensitive to these differences. This does not come naturally, but individuals make a conscious effort to behave in culturally sensitive ways. They are in the process of replacing old intuitions with new ones. The highest level is spontaneous sensitivity (conscious-competent). Individuals no longer have to think about what they are doing in order to be culturally sensitive in a familiar culture. Culturally appropriate behavior comes naturally at this point, and individuals trust their intuition because it has been reconditioned by what has been learned and experienced about cross-cultural interactions.

Colleges and universities hold the primary responsibility of preparing future educators to work in P-12 settings. In terms of knowledge and understanding, preparation programs seek to develop future educators who are culturally competent, as described below.

1. Knowledge and understanding of: (a) principles of human development and the nature of individual and group differences; (b) the social, cognitive, emotional, and environmental factors that affect development; (c) a variety of methods for identifying and assessing students; (d) current and seminal research related to learning theory, giftedness, and creativity; and (e) theoretical models, program prototypes, and educational principles that offer appropriate foundations for developing differentiated curriculum for RCD students.

2. The ability and training to: (a) interpret and apply knowledge related to the needs of Black and Hispanic students; (b) identify and assess the unique or specific needs of RCD students; (c) act as a change agent in social, cultural, political, and economic environments inhibiting services to students; (d) vary teaching styles and instructional strategies to help RCD students meet their academic interests, goals, and needs; and (e) develop in RCD students the attitudes and skills needed to become independent, lifelong learners, to self-evaluate, and to set and pursue appropriate personal and academic goals for future success (Whiting, 2006).

Based on the analysis presented in this chapter, the following recommendations are provided for improving educators’ competence to work with RCD students.

1. Personal exposure and experience: (a) increased self-understanding and views about working with non-White students by educations. This requires involvement in experiences that allow them to examine their own cultures, and to better understand the concept and significance of culture; and (b) close examination of their beliefs and assumptions regarding RCD students—including biases, stereotypes, and prejudices.

2. Cultural exposure and experience: (a) educators need opportunities and experiences that expose them to ways to become more culturally competent. These experiences cannot take place solely by reading books and articles; there must be ongoing opportunities to interact with RCD students, families, and communities—to become somewhat immersed in their lives; and (b) educators can benefit from early, consistent, and ongoing experiences that expose them to RCD students, families, and communities;

3. Linguistic exposure and experience: Again, with early and consistent experiences with linguistically different students, educators can come to understand the importance of language, and the implications of bilingualism and limited English proficiency in learning and achievement.

4. Social exposure and experience: Substantive preparation for educators can effectively address prejudice and discrimination in school settings, such as reducing racism, sexism, and classism in attitudes, assessment, and curriculum; the theories of Robert Merton, Gordon Allport, and Derald Sue are essential. As described by Ford, Trotman Scott, Moore, and Amos (2013), microaggressions, degrees of prejudice and discrimination, and attention to intentional and unintentional racism are all important.

5. Culturally responsive curriculum and instruction: To learn how to design, implement, and evaluate culturally responsive curriculum and instruction for all students. James Banks’ model of how to infuse multicultural content in the curriculum is useful and rigorous. Ford (2011) adapted Banks’s model, adding critical thinking by Bloom (Anderson et al., 2001); the resultant Bloom–Banks matrix offers educators ways to develop lesson plans that are rigorous and relevant. More information is presented in Ford (2011).

6. Learning environment and classroom management: Educators can learn how to develop supportive, affirming, and nurturing environments for RCD students; this competence will help to improve classroom management, which increases teaching and learning time and, thus, achievement.

A Final Word

It cannot be denied that Black and Hispanic students individually and as groups are not faring well in our schools. The key indicator is the achievement gap; other indicators, such as the overrepresentation of such students in special education and among suspensions, as well as their underrepresentation in gifted education, are different manifestations of this same problem. The need for educational psychology to devote attention to these two groups is a non-trivial matter, especially given current and projected demographics showing that numbers of Hispanic and Black children are increasing quickly in schools and the nation at large. The racial demographics of teachers remains rather low and stagnant; accordingly, once again, the analysis I have presented in this chapter suggests that educators and educational psychologists who champion being culturally responsive have the potential to create an education that can help Black and Hispanic students to achieve cultural pride, equity, and cultural congruency.

Note

1. The term “racially and culturally different” is preferred to “racially and culturally diverse,” based on my belief that everyone has a culture. The problem is how educators view and respond to differences in race and culture. “Racially and culturally different” students are those who are different from the mainstream; they are non-White—Black, Hispanic American, American Indian, and Asian American.

References

A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives. New York: Longman.


