What is Multicultural Learning?

Multicultural Learning is learning that integrates and explores the rich tapestry of perspectives reflected in our diverse world. It occurs when differences among learners are both valued and explored. Multicultural Learning recognizes and reaches across boundaries of ability, age, class, gender, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation and other personal, social and cultural identities so that learners will more thoroughly understand the multifaceted dimensions of knowledge.

Multicultural Learning re-examines and expands what is taught, and attends to who is in the classroom and is transparent about why this matters. It embraces the lived experience of the students, their families and their communities, connects with concepts of social justice and power, and teaches students how to investigate and integrate diverse ways of thinking and doing.

Multicultural Learning must be cultivated. Learners need practice and guidance to become active listeners, readers and writers striving to understand what others are saying and meaning. Sustaining Multicultural Learning involves creating classroom climates in which students and teachers can acknowledge and address the discomfort of working across boundaries, learn how to respond to difference, and grow intellectually and personally as a consequence. To make multicultural learning both possible and effective, instructors must structure classroom interactions to be respectful and challenging, creative and meaningful, engaged and transformative. In such an environment, inaccuracies, mistakes, hasty generalizations and intolerance are addressed with honesty and care.

Through regular and purposeful interactions that encourage students to reflect on and explore the implications of diversity and power, Multicultural Learning is education for life in our multicultural world.

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