

We risk depriving our children of the enriched, equitable, rigorous education they are entitled to, if American educators fail to place multiculturalism and racial and cultural competence at the forefront of teacher education programs and professional development initiatives. Educational leaders must stand up for all students, demonstrate courage, and take risks by moving beyond awareness of multiculturalism and racial and cultural competence in American education. It is vital that all design and implementation decisions regarding education in the 21st century take into consideration the success of marginalized racial/ethnic groups and students' and teachers' understanding of cultural, social, and political inequities. The importance for educators to think deeply about how their attitudes and actions shape classroom communities and school cultures is imperative. In *Human Development in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, we embraced a greater understanding of multiculturalism within education and came to appreciate its importance in our role as educational leaders.

Prof. Douglas facilitated a number of cohort discussions surrounding topics covered in Gollnick and Chinn's , *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*. These discussions allowed for each of us, as practicing leaders in the field of education, to share and learn from our own experiences. It was clear that we each had something to add and something to learn. We also had the opportunity to critique three articles from the book, *Building Racial and Cultural Competence in the Classroom* edited by Teel and Obdiah. As a final project we analyzed issues surrounding multicultural education within our own school communities and had the opportunity to critique each other's observations.

As a result of participating in this course, our perspectives on multicultural education have dramatically changed. Educators must think deeply about how their attitudes and actions shape classroom communities and school cultures, both implicitly and explicitly. Educators are called upon to embrace students from all backgrounds and they must be committed to understand, support, guide, and encourage them. The lessons we have learned and the awareness that we have cultivated from contributing in this course will blanket us with support as we continue to work with students, families, and school communities of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.