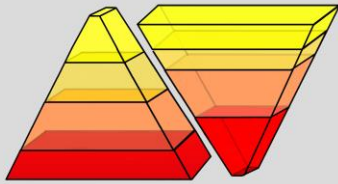
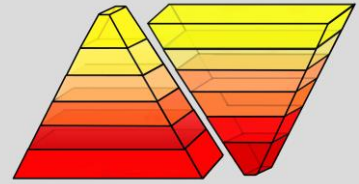


Framing Multicultural Curriculum Development



Four Developmental Models

Hal Schmid, Ed.D.
hschmid@montana.com



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In 1999, after American Indians across Montana had worked for decades, House Bill 528 (Indian Education for All) was introduced in the Montana state legislature. The bill eventually passed both houses and was enacted into law as MCA 20-1-501. With Indian Education for All, the State of Montana directed public schools to include content about Montana Indians in their curricula—for Indian and non-Indian students alike. This resulted in a huge curriculum gap that needed to be filled.

Indian Education for All (IEFA) rests on words in Article X of the Montana Constitution (1972): “The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.” Those words, in turn, came about after American Indian high school students from Fort Peck Indian Reservation traveled to the state capitol during the 1972 Montana Constitutional Convention and implored constitutional delegates—don’t forget about Indian people. The students asked that their own history be included in high school courses (Juneau & Broaddus, 2006, p. 193). Twenty-eight years later, IEFA was ratified.

Challenges soon appeared however. A large rural state, Montana is home to seven Indian reservations with twelve indigenous language groups. Each tribal nation enjoys a unique history and cultural heritage. How were schools and teachers to respectfully and authentically present each tribe’s heritage as well as their collective experience as Montana Indians? How were educators to find quality materials and schools to provide meaningful professional development?

Educators took up the challenge, but answers did not come immediately. Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and OPI Indian Education Specialist Denise Juneau, who currently serves as State Superintendent of Schools, provided vision and leadership through statewide gatherings and curriculum initiatives. One gathering in 2001 brought Native and non-Native educators and laypersons together. Following a workshop exploring 1998's *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), the group drafted eight statements, each accompanied by a short narrative. *Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians: Concepts Every Montana Educator Should Know about American Indians* (2001) proved foundational. With the door open, dedicated teachers stepped forward looking for guidance in selecting and integrating American Indian content.

Approaching Multicultural Curriculum Development

Encouraged to teach a summer course at University of Montana in 2003, I designed a course addressing IEFA. This seemed one way to help set expectations within the state's higher education system. C&I 595, *Integrating IEFA in Montana Classrooms*, was thus offered for several summers.

Teachers registering for that first summer course included a librarian and elementary, world language, social studies, and science teachers. They entered expecting to be shown what to teach. Instead we spent class time developing relationships, exploring cultural lenses the teachers brought to their classrooms, and interacting with American Indian educators in face-to-face conversations. Each teacher then began developing a bibliography of resources—texts, primary source documents, multimedia, on-line materials, and contact information for Montana tribes and American Indian educators and leaders.

Finally, before introducing four theoretical models and developing IEFA units, we discussed Banks' (1988) "Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform." Banks' first approach, Contributions, initiates inclusion of discrete cultural elements such as heroes, holidays, and food. The Additive Approach follows, integrating more content, concepts, and

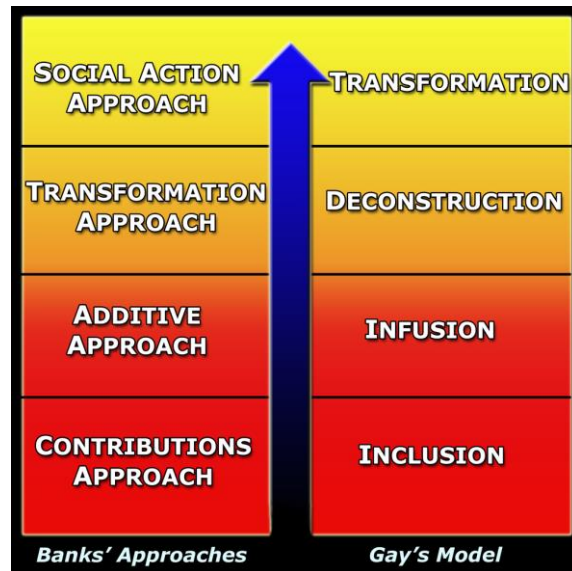


Figure 1. Banks' "Approaches" and Gay's Multicultural Curriculum Model have four levels.

themes without changing the structure of the curriculum. The structure *does* change with the Transformation Approach as students view concepts, issues, and content from the perspective of the cultural entities and groups involved. Finally, the Social Action Approach engages students in activities that attempt to impact decisions and social institutions around them.

Gay's Multicultural Curriculum Model

Following discussion of Banks' Approaches, Gay's (1995) Multicultural Curriculum Model was introduced as the first theoretical structure teachers would use when they began creating IEFA units. Gay's model essentially parallels Banks' approaches with heroes, holidays, and artifacts again defining the starting point. See Figure 1. Gay characterized multicultural content at this Inclusion level as fragmented, frozen, and isolated—usually involving cultural icons. With Infusion the focus shifts from icons to issues, incidents, topics, and themes. While this content impacts all elements of the curriculum, it does not question existing paradigms or social structures. Deconstruction *does* move the curriculum into an arena of questioning, critique, and speculation on a deep level. Finally, at Transformation the curriculum is re-conceptualized and re-created. Transformative

curricula expand students' perspectives, challenging them to imagine other possibilities and moving them to social action to address issues that have been raised.

Gay noted that her model is progressive and developmental, but the addition of multicultural content is not linear. Moving from Inclusion to Infusion, content is integrated at an increasing rate. Likewise, the multicultural understanding and content knowledge required to support inquiry and questioning at the Deconstruction level is much greater than could be achieved by simple linear addition of content from Infusion to Deconstruction. This relationship is depicted in Figure 2 with an inverted pyramid.

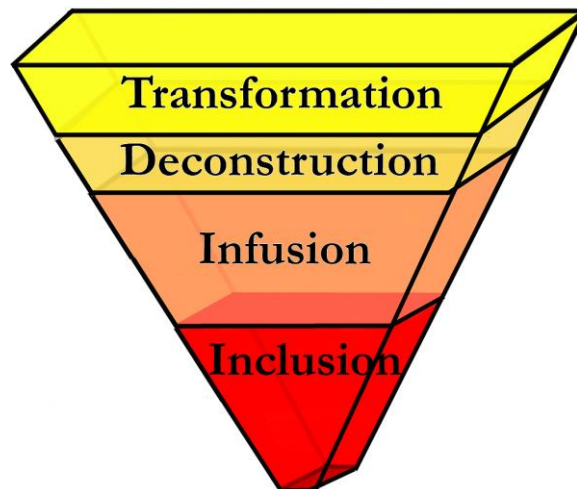


Figure 2. Gay's multicultural curriculum model is developmental and non-linear.

In helping C&I 595 teachers understand the powerful role IEFA content could play in their classrooms, it was useful to bring Bloom's Taxonomy into the discussion next. Bloom's model provides a meaningful complement to Gay's model.

A Model of Cognitive Functions: Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

The hierarchical cognitive domains Bloom and his colleagues identified have changed since they were presented in my teacher education courses. Revised in two ways, the six static domains identified by nouns are now six active functions identified with verbs (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In addition, synthesis/create was raised to the highest level. See Figure 3.

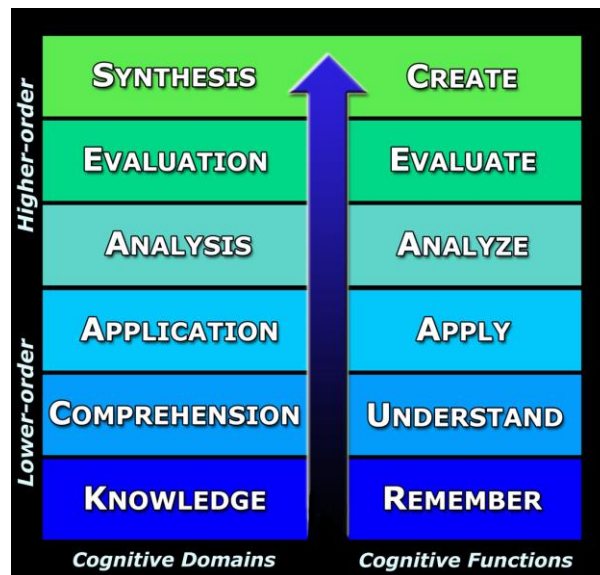


Figure 3. Bloom's Revised Taxonomy shifts from static domains to active functions.

There is little need to note the significance of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy in education. It *is* useful to return to Bloom with an eye on multicultural curriculum however. Often depicted as a ladder illustrating the progressive nature of the six levels, Bloom's Revised Taxonomy does not describe a simple, linear progression of skills. Rather, higher-order skills rest on a much larger volume of lower-order skills, activities, and artifacts. Sometimes represented graphically with an equilateral triangle, it is represented in Figure 4 as a three-dimensional pyramid again.

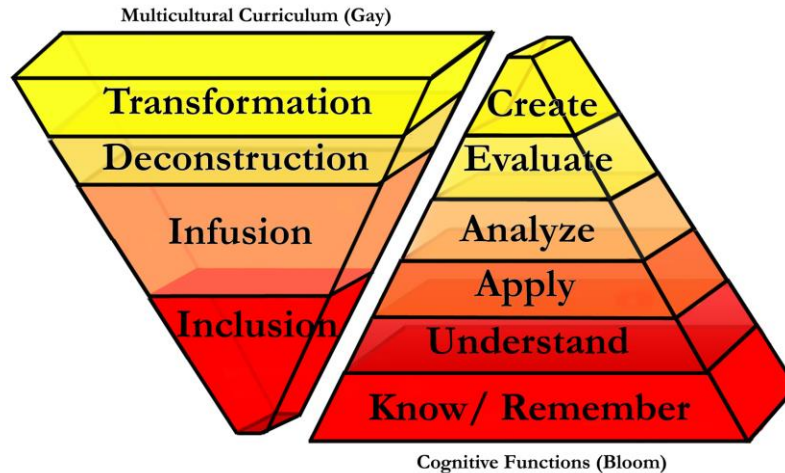


Figure 4. Placed side by side, relationships between Gay’s model and Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy become apparent.

With Bloom’s pyramid placed beside Gay’s pyramid, relationships between cognitive functions and multicultural curriculum become apparent. At this point in C&I 595 then, I would introduce a third model. Teachers generally failed to appreciate it as they focused on identifying content for their classrooms. However, in understanding multicultural curriculum development—and in designing meaningful professional development to support integration of multicultural content—this model is quite useful.

Salyer’s Cultural Versatility Model

The first day of class in June 2003, we sat in a circle taking turns introducing ourselves, describing our educational situations, and stating reasons for registering for the course. One woman—an elementary teacher from a reservation border town—stated that she had taught in her community for many years and did not see color. She said she treated all children the same. I watched the woman closely, sized up the situation, and decided to let this teaching moment pass for the time being. But a teacher across the circle from the woman fidgeted in her chair. When that teacher’s turn for self-introduction arrived, the woman introduced herself as a teacher from a suburban high school and went on to relate how a young Native student had approached her one day for advice. The girl stated that her English teacher did not seem to be aware she was Indian. It made the student feel uncomfortable, and she didn’t know what to do.

For my part, I had been confounded at how to deal with this same situation when I began administering collaborative grant projects across school districts on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Initially, when a teacher of European heritage would say, “I don’t see color” or “I treat all kids the same,” I knew this stance was problematic for her/his students, but I wasn’t sure how to respond. Teachers who spoke this way typically believed their mindset was open, evolved, and exemplary. However, it wasn’t difficult to see that the most exemplary teachers in these schools did not treat “all kids the same” but, rather, treated each child special. Still, what was the best way to move teachers to a higher level of cultural awareness?

Salyer’s (1993) model helps explain cultural interactions that play out in classrooms and schools. Salyer identified six stages of cultural understanding, the lowest being Ignorance, characterized by total lack of awareness of anything outside the individual’s host culture. At the Rejection stage, awareness of cultural differences appear, but this limited awareness often results in cultural segregation and negative stereotyping. Approximation shifts the focus to similarities between cultures but brings a blurring of distinctions and an approximation of cultural values—the domain of “color-blind” teachers.

With Awareness, an individual’s cognitive understanding of intercultural behavior increases, but lack of appreciation for other cultures’ underlying values or worldviews remains. Likewise, lack of participation in their cultural customs and observances persists. Reaching Approval, an individual typically accepts and approves both cultural differences and similarities and *participates* in customs and observances of another culture. Finally, with Versatility, an individual is seen as fluent in more than one culture, able to move smoothly between them, and comfortably at home in each—a rare situation, Salyer contended.

Salyer’s model is developmental. An individual who progresses to Awareness does not slip back to Ignorance. An individual who views life through the lens of cultural Approval will not likely revert to flatly rejecting all cultural activities and behaviors. In working to help teachers address IEFA then, it was useful to look at each teacher as an individual on a journey, each with her/his own starting point. Through professional development, we can help each teacher

build a steadily increasing base of intercultural knowledge and experience that moves the teacher along a pathway toward cultural Awareness, Approval, or even Versatility.

These days, when I listen to a teacher tell me she/he doesn't see color—she/he treats all children the same—I have a favorite response. I smile warmly. I look the teacher in the eyes, and I say, “That’s great—do you treat them all as boys or all as girls?” And, as the teacher forms the inevitable “that’s different” protest, I smile and reflect on how far we’ve come since Title IX.

A Critical Fourth Model: Literacy Development

Finn (2009) examined education studies through the lens of privilege and class struggle, arguing that some children in the United States receive "empowering" education while all too often the rest receive "domesticating" education. Highlighting differences, he identified four literacy levels—performative, functional, informational, and powerful. Empowering education, Finn argued, leads to powerful literacy and "reading the world" (Freire, 1983).

Finn defined literacy in static domains using noun modifiers. Educators typically express literacy in terms of active, developmental processes however—Learning to Read, Reading to Learn, Reading for Understanding, and Reading the World—with each process building on lower processes just as Bloom’s cognitive functions do (Chall, 1983; Biancarosa, 2012; Freire, 1983). Therefore, while the Gay and Salyer models represent curricular and cultural states-of-being respectively, the Bloom and literacy models describe dynamic processes. See Figure 5.

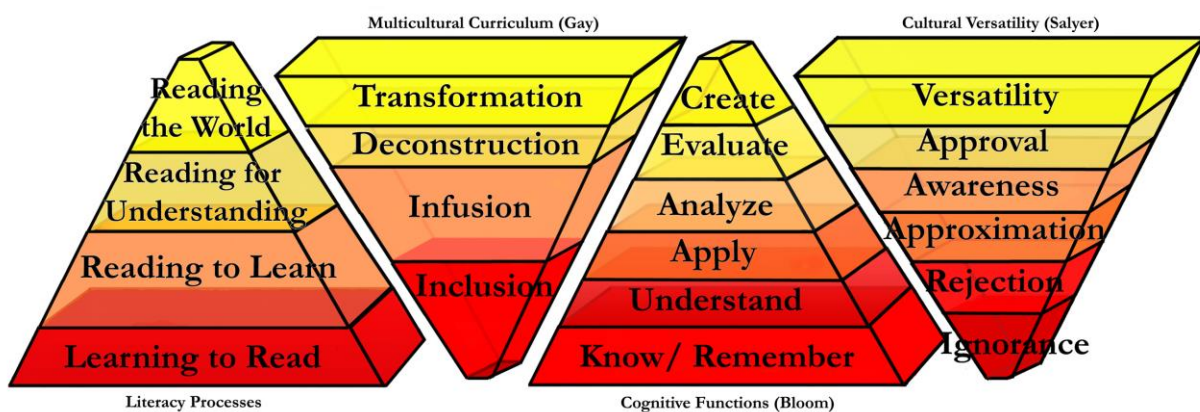


Figure 5. The four developmental models together form an important framework.

In synthesizing/creating, students remember, understand, analyze, and evaluate. In Reading the World, students read to learn and understand. Likewise, students engaged in transformative curriculum synthesize and create solutions or social responses while reading the world.

Reflecting on a Decade of Indian Education for All

When Montana's IEFA was enacted in 1999, there was neither accountability nor funding included in the legislation. That had to wait for later legislative sessions. The state anted up however, and OPI developed competitive grant initiatives—the first focused on K-12 professional development. In 2005, Ready-to-Go followed, a curriculum development grant competition for schools and agencies to produce lesson plans or authentic content OPI could reproduce and distribute to schools.

St. Ignatius Public Schools on the Flathead Indian Reservation, where I worked as curriculum coordinator and grants administrator, received a Ready-to-Go grant. We utilized C&I 595 in our design, and state funding allowed us to include tribal educator Julie Cajune and literacy consultant Mary Jo Swartley as participants. Together we read, discussed, and built shared understandings. Then participating elementary, middle, and high school teachers identified projects and began developing curricula with support from Cajune, Swartley, and each other. Before beginning however, the teachers—predominantly non-Native reservation residents—were clear to state that they felt comfortable infusing content, and they aspired to Deconstruction, but Transformation was beyond their reach. It was a start.

Today, we can look back on a decade of IEFA curriculum development and note its impact. Cajune and Swartley each worked with teachers at neighboring Arlee Public Schools following our Ready-to-Go collaboration. *Inside Anna's Classroom* (Cajune, 2012), an educational DVD, captures Arlee students in Anna Baldwin's 10th-grade English class engaged with primary source documents surrounding creation of the Flathead Indian Reservation, allotment and opening of the reservation to non-Native homesteaders, as well as construction of Kerr Dam to provide electricity for residents outside the reservation.

Exploring issues that continue to fragment their community, the students—Indian, mixed-blood tribal descendants, and non-Native grandchildren of homesteaders—together examine the U.S. Constitution, the Hellgate Treaty, newspaper archives, and historic photos before reading *Wind from an Enemy Sky*, a novel by tribal member D’arcy McNickle (1978).

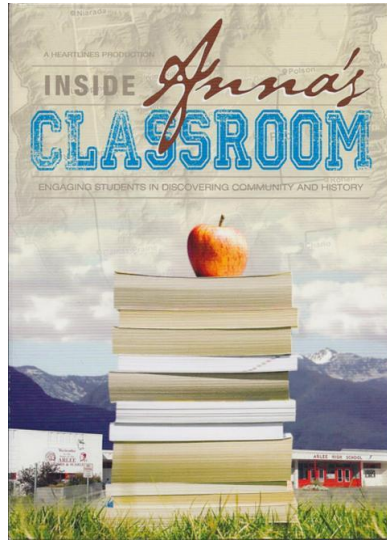


Figure 6. *Inside Anna's Classroom* is a showcase of best practices and quality curriculum.

Inside Anna's Classroom showcases exemplary literacy instruction and IEFA curriculum. From spirit reads and Socratic circles to a culminating fieldtrip to Kerr Dam with a tribal biologist, students analyze, evaluate, and deconstruct meaning. Yet Baldwin's students did not stop at Deconstruction as shown on the DVD. They ultimately finished their study by identifying related issues in their community, undertaking problem-solving and solution-finding processes, then selecting actions they pursued collectively (A. Baldwin, personal communication, August 15, 2012). Synthesizing. Reading the World. Transformation. Indian Education for All.

In 1972, American Indian students from Fort Peck Indian Reservation traveled to the Montana Constitutional Convention asking not to be forgotten. In 2012, a group of Indian and non-Indian students in Arlee, Montana engaged in Reading the World and together pursued social action to improve their community. Youth, if given a voice, will lead.

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