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# Teaching for Social Justice, Diversity, and Citizenship in a Global World

by *James A. Banks*

## **Abstract**

*Racial, ethnic, cultural, and language diversity is increasing in nation-states throughout the world because of worldwide immigration. The deepening ethnic diversity within nation-states and the quest by different groups for cultural recognition and rights are challenging assimilationist notions of citizenship and forcing nation-states to construct new conceptions of citizenship and citizenship education. A delicate balance of unity and diversity should be an essential goal of citizenship education in multicultural nation-states. Citizenship education should help students to develop thoughtful and clarified identifications with their cultural communities, nation-states, and the global community. It also should enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to act to make the nation and the world more democratic and just.*

The increasing ethnic, cultural, language, and religious diversity in nation-states throughout the world has raised new questions and possibilities about educating students for effective citizenship. Since World War II, nation-states throughout the Western world have become more diversified because of immigration and other factors. Ethnic and cultural diversity in the Western European nations such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands increased greatly after World War II. Groups from the former colonies of these nations in Asia, Africa, and the West Indies immigrated to Europe to satisfy labor needs and to improve their economic status (Banks and Lynch 1986).

Although the United States has been diverse since its founding, the ethnic texture of the nation has changed dramatically since the Immigration Reform Act was enacted in 1965. Most of the immigrants to the United States came from nations in Europe between 1901 and 1910. Between 1991 and 1998, however, the majority of immigrants to the United States came from nations in Latin America and Asia. The U.S. Census Bureau (2000) projects that ethnic groups of color will make up 47 percent of the U.S. population in 2050. Students of color now make up 40 percent of the students in the nation's public schools.

### ***Challenges to the Assimilationist Notion of Citizenship***

An assimilationist conception of citizenship education existed in most of the Western democratic nation-states prior to the rise of the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s. A major goal of citizenship education in these nations was to create nation-states in which all groups shared one dominant mainstream culture. It was assumed that ethnic and immigrant groups had to forsake their original cultures to fully participate in the nation-state (Patterson 1977).

The ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s strongly challenged the assimilationist conception of citizenship education. These movements, triggered by the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, echoed throughout the world. French and Indians in Canada, West Indians and Asians in Britain, Indonesians and Surinamese in the Netherlands, and Aborigines in Australia joined the series of ethnic movements, expressed their feelings of marginalization, and worked to make the institutions within their nation-states responsive to their economic, political, and cultural needs.

Indigenous peoples and ethnic groups within the various Western nations—such as American Indians in the United States, Aborigines in Australia, Maori in New Zealand, African Caribbeans in the United Kingdom, and Moluccans in the Netherlands—wanted their histories and cultures to be reflected in their national cultures and in school, college, and university curricula (Eldering and Kloprogge 1989; Gillborn 1990; Smith 1999). Multicultural education was developed, in part, to respond to the concerns of ethnic, racial, and cultural groups that felt marginalized within their nation-states (Banks and Banks 2004).

The right of ethnic and cultural minorities to maintain important aspects of their cultures and languages has been supported by philosophers and educators since the first decades of the 1900s. Julius Drachler (1920) and Horace M. Kallen (1924)—of immigrant backgrounds themselves—argued that the southern, central, and eastern European immigrants who were entering the United States in large numbers had a right to retain parts of their cultures and languages while enjoying full citizenship rights. Cultural democracy, argued Drachler, is an essential component of a political democracy.

In the first decades of the 1900s, Rachel Davis DuBois established school ethnic heritage programs for European immigrant groups. Leonard Covello was the principal of a community school that incorporated the culture of Italian-American students (C. Banks 2004). More recently, Will Kymlicka (1995), a Canadian political theorist, maintained that ethnic and immigrant groups should have the right to maintain their ethnic cultures and languages as well as participate fully in the civic cultures of democratic nation-states.

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### ***Balancing Unity and Diversity***

Cultural, ethnic, racial, language, and religious diversity exists in most nations in the world. One of the challenges to diverse democratic nation-states is to provide opportunities for different groups to maintain aspects of their community cultures while building a nation in which these groups are structurally included and to which they feel allegiance. A delicate balance of diversity and unity should be an essential goal of democratic nation-states and of teaching and learning in democratic societies (Banks et al. 2001). Unity must be an important aim when nation-states are responding to diversity within their populations. They can protect the rights of minorities and enable diverse groups to participate only when they are unified around a set of democratic values such as justice and equality (Gutmann 2004).

Citizenship education must be transformed in the 21st century because of the deepening racial, ethnic, cultural, language, and religious diversity in nation-states throughout the world. Citizens in a diverse democratic society should be able to maintain attachments to their cultural communities as well as participate effectively in the shared national culture. Unity without diversity results in cultural repression and hegemony. Diversity without unity leads to Balkanization and the fracturing of the nation-state. Diversity and unity should coexist in a delicate balance in democratic, multicultural nation-states.

### ***Literacy, Social Justice, and Citizenship Education***

Literacy as defined and codified in the high-stakes tests that are being implemented in most states in the United States is often interpreted as basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. I am very concerned about a conception of literacy that defines it only as basic skills and ignores citizenship participation in national and global contexts. Although it is essential that all students acquire basic skills in literacy, basic skills are necessary but not sufficient in our diverse and troubled world. Literate citizens in a diverse democratic society should be reflective, moral, and active citizens in an interconnected global world. They should have the knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to change the world to make it more just and democratic. The world's greatest problems do not result from people being unable to read and write. They result from people in the world—from different cultures, races, religions, and nations—being unable to get along and to work together to solve the world's intractable problems such as global warming, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, poverty, racism, sexism, and war. Examples are the conflicts between the United States and Iraq, North Korea and its neighbors, and the Israelis and Palestinians.

In addition to mastering basic reading and writing skills, literate citizens in democratic multicultural societies such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom should develop *multicultural literacy* (J. Banks 2003). Multicultural literacy consists of the skills and abilities to identify the creators of knowledge and their interests (J. Banks 1996), to uncover the assumptions of knowledge, to view knowledge from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives, and to use knowledge to guide action that will create a humane and just world. When we teach students how to critique the injustice in the world, we should help them to formulate possibilities for action to change the world to make it more democratic and just. Critique without hope may leave students disillusioned and without agency (Freire 1997).

### ***The Bellagio Diversity and Citizenship Education Project***

Citizenship education needs to be changed in significant ways because of the increasing diversity within nation-states throughout the world and the quests by racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups for cultural recognition and rights (J. Banks 2004; Castles 2004). The Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington has implemented a project to reform citizenship education so that it will advance democracy as well as be responsive to the needs of cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, and immigrant groups within multicultural nation-states. The first part of this project consisted of a conference, "Ethnic Diversity and Citizenship Education in Multicultural Nation-States," held at the Rockefeller Foundation's Study and Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy, June 17–21, 2002 (Bellagio Conference). The conference, which was supported by the Spencer and Rockefeller Foundations, included participants from 12 nations: Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Palestine, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The papers from this conference are published in *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives* (J. Banks 2004).

One of the conclusions of the conference was that world migration and the political and economic aspects of globalization are challenging nation-states and national borders. At the same time, national borders remain tenacious; the number of nations in the world is increasing rather than decreasing. The number of United Nations member-states increased from 80 in 1950 to 191 in 2002 (Castles 2004). Globalization and nationalism are contradictory but coexisting trends and forces in the world today. Consequently, educators throughout the world should rethink and redesign citizenship education courses and programs. Citizenship education should help students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function in their nation-states as well as in a diverse world society that is experiencing rapid globalization and quests by ethnic, cultural, language, and religious groups for recognition and inclusion. It should also help them to develop a commitment to act to change the world to make it more just.

Another conclusion of the Bellagio Conference was that citizenship and citizenship education are defined and implemented differently in various nations and in different social, economic, and political contexts. It is also a contested idea in nation-states throughout the world. However, there are shared problems, concepts, and issues, such as the need to prepare students in various nations to function within, as well as across, national borders. An international group should identify these shared issues and problems and formulate guidelines for dealing with them. In response to this Bellagio Conference recommendation, the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington created an international consensus panel that is developing principles and identifying concepts for educating citizens for democracy and diversity in a global age (J. Banks et al. in press).

### ***Increasing Diversity and Global Citizenship Education***

Citizens in this century need the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to function in their cultural communities and beyond their cultural borders. They also should be able and willing to participate in the construction of a national civic culture that is a moral and just community. The national community should embody democratic ideals and values,

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such as those articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Students also need to acquire the knowledge and skills required to become effective citizens in the global community.

The community cultures and languages of students from diverse groups were to be eradicated in the assimilationist conception of citizenship education that existed in the United States prior to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. One consequence of assimilationist citizenship education was that many students lost their original cultures, languages, and ethnic identities. Some students also became alienated from family and community. Another consequence was that many students became socially and politically alienated within the national civic culture.

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Members of identifiable racial groups often became marginalized in both their community cultures and in the national civic culture because they could function effectively in neither. When they acquired the language and culture of the Anglo mainstream, they often were denied structural inclusion and full participation into the civic culture because of their racial characteristics (Alba and Nee 2003; Gordon 1964).

### ***The Development of Cultural, National, and Global Identifications***

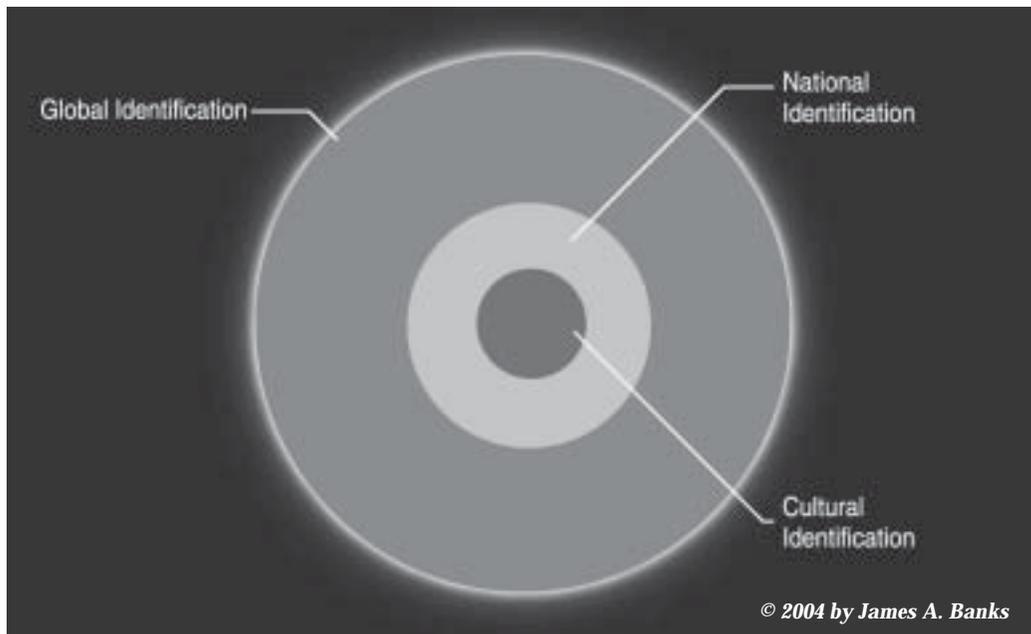
Assimilationist notions of citizenship are ineffective in this century because of the deepening diversity throughout the world and the quests by marginalized groups for cultural recognition and rights. *Multicultural citizenship* is essential for today's global age (Kymlicka 1995). It recognizes and legitimizes the rights and needs of citizens to maintain commitments both to their cultural communities and to the national civic culture. Only when the national civic culture is transformed in ways that reflect and give voice to the diverse ethnic, racial, language, and religious communities that constitute it will it be viewed as legitimate by all of its citizens. Only then can citizens develop clarified commitments to the nation-state and its ideals.

Citizenship education should help students to develop thoughtful and clarified identifications with their cultural communities and their nation-states. It also should help them to develop clarified global identifications and deep understandings of their roles in the world community. Students need to understand how life in their cultural communities and nations influences other nations and the cogent influence that international events have on their daily lives. Global education's major goals should be to help students understand the interdependence among nations in the world today, to clarify attitudes toward other nations, and to develop reflective identifications with the world community.

Nonreflective and unexamined cultural attachments may prevent the development of a cohesive nation with clearly defined national goals and policies. Although we need to help students develop reflective and clarified cultural identifications, they also must be helped to clarify their identifications with their nation-states. Blind nationalism, however, will prevent students from developing reflective and positive global identifications. Nationalism and national attachments in most nations are strong and tenacious. An important aim of citizenship education should be to help students develop global identifications. They also must develop a deep understanding of the need to take action as citizens of the global community to help solve the world's difficult global problems. Cultural, national, and global experiences and identifications are interactive and inter-related in a dynamic way.

Students should develop a delicate balance of cultural, national, and global identifications (Figure 1). A nation-state that alienates and does not structurally include all cultural groups into the national culture runs the risk of creating alienation and causing groups to focus on specific concerns and issues rather than on the overarching goals and policies of the nation-state. To develop reflective cultural, national, and global identifications, students must acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function within and across diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, language, and religious groups.

**Figure 1: Cultural, National, and Global Identifications**



### ***The Continuing Importance of Cultural Identifications***

I have argued that students should develop a delicate balance of cultural, national, and global identifications and allegiances. I conceptualize global identification similar to the way in which Nussbaum (2002, 4) defined cosmopolitanism: people “whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings.” Nussbaum

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(2002, 9) pointed out, however, that “to be a citizen of the world one does not need to give up local identifications, which can be a source of great richness in life.”

I believe that cultural, national, and global identifications are interrelated in a developmental way, and that students cannot develop thoughtful and clarified national identifications until they have reflective and clarified cultural identifications, and that they cannot develop a global or cosmopolitan identification until they have acquired a reflective national identification. We cannot expect Mexican-American students who do not value their own cultural identity and who have negative attitudes toward Mexican-American culture to embrace and fully accept Anglo or African-American students.

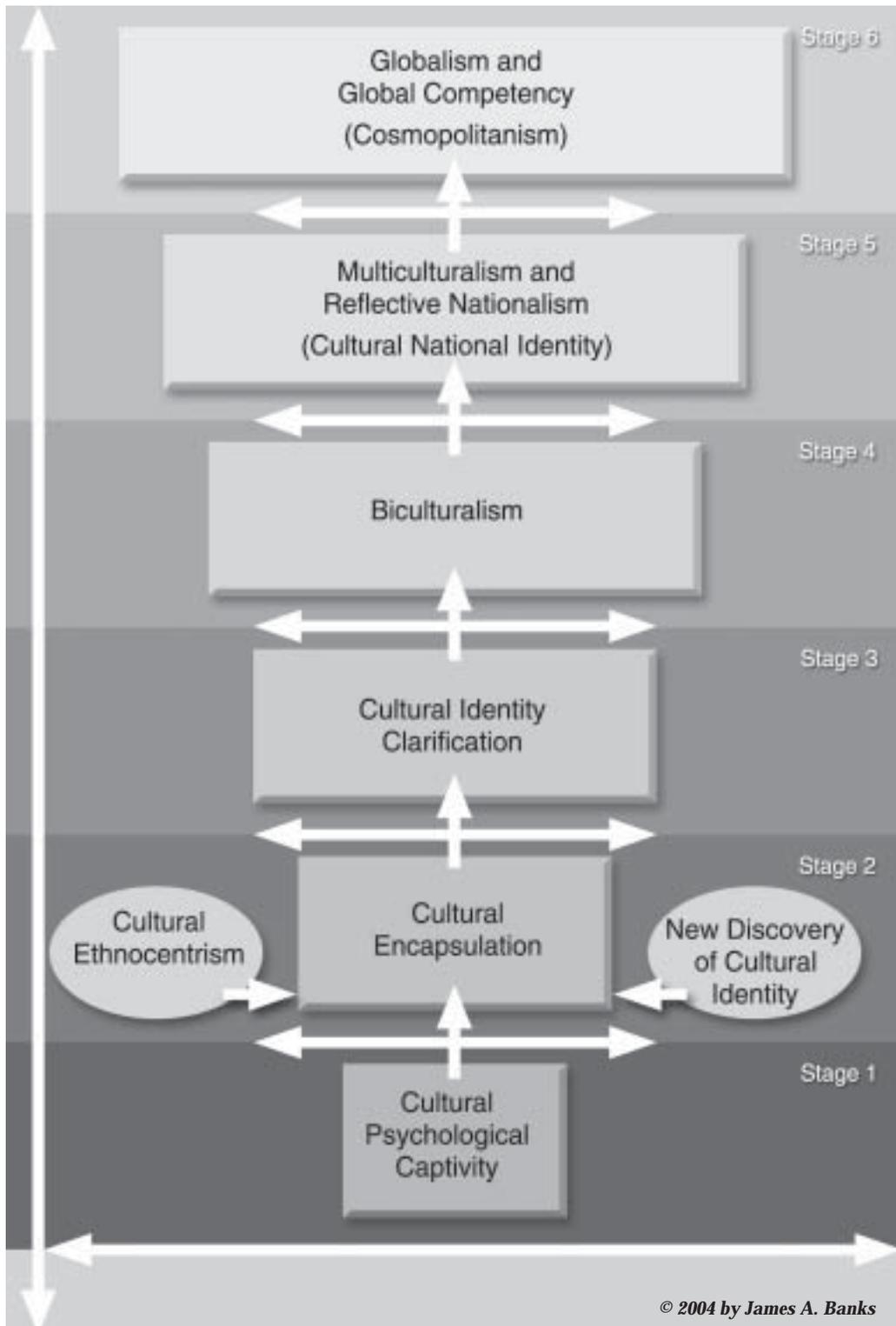
### ***The Stages of Cultural Identity***

Self-acceptance is a prerequisite to the acceptance and valuing of others. Students from racial, cultural, and language minority groups that have historically experienced institutionalized discrimination, racism, or other forms of marginalization often have a difficult time accepting and valuing their own ethnic and cultural heritages. Teachers should be aware of and sensitive to the stages of cultural development that all of their students—including mainstream students, students of color, and other marginalized groups of students—may be experiencing and facilitate their identity development.

Using my *Stages of Cultural Development Typology* (Figure 2), teachers can help students attain higher stages of cultural development and develop clarified cultural, national, and global identifications (J. Banks 2001). I believe that students need to reach Stage 3 of this typology, “Cultural Identity Clarification,” before we can expect them to embrace other cultural groups or attain thoughtful and clarified national or global identifications. The typology is an ideal-type concept. Consequently, it does not describe the actual identity development of any particular individual. Rather, it is a framework for thinking about and facilitating the identity development of students who approximate one of the stages.

During Stage 1, “Cultural Psychology Captivity,” individuals internalize the negative stereotypes and beliefs about their cultural groups that are institutionalized within the larger society and may exemplify cultural self-rejection and low self-esteem. Cultural encapsulation and cultural exclusiveness, and the belief that their ethnic group is superior to others, characterize Stage 2, “Cultural Encapsulation.” Individuals within this stage often have newly discovered their cultural consciousness and try to limit participation to their cultural group. They have ambivalent feelings about their cultural group and try to confirm, for themselves, that they are proud of it. In Stage 3, “Cultural Identity Clarification,” individuals are able to clarify their personal attitudes and cultural identity and to develop clarified positive attitudes toward their cultural group. In this stage, cultural pride is genuine rather than contrived. Individuals within Stage 4, “Biculturalism,” have a healthy sense of cultural identity and the psychological characteristics to participate successfully in their own cultural community as well as in another cultural community. They also have a strong desire to function effectively in two cultures.

Figure 2: Stages of Cultural Identity Typology



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Individuals in Stage 5, “Multiculturalism and Reflective Nationalism,” have clarified, reflective, and positive personal, cultural, and national identifications and positive attitudes toward other racial, cultural, and ethnic groups. At Stage 6, “Globalism and Global Competency,” individuals have reflective and clarified national and global identifications. They have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within their own cultural communities, within other cultures within their nation-state, in the civic culture of their nation, and in the global community. Individuals within Stage 6 exemplify cosmopolitanism and have a commitment to all human beings in the world

community (Nussbaum 2002). Gutmann (2004) argued that the primary commitment of these individuals is to justice, not to any human community.

*Teachers should be aware of and sensitive to the stages of cultural development that all of their students—including mainstream students, students of color, and other marginalized groups of students—may be experiencing and facilitate their identity development.*

Strong, positive, and clarified cultural identifications and attachments are a prerequisite to cosmopolitan beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. It is not realistic to expect Puerto Rican students in New York City to have a strong allegiance to U.S. national values or deep feelings for dying

people in Afghanistan if they feel marginalized and rejected within their community, their school, and in their nation-state. We must nurture, support, and affirm the identities of students from marginalized cultural, ethnic, and language groups if we expect them to endorse national values, become cosmopolitans, and work to make their local communities, the nation, and the world more just and humane.

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