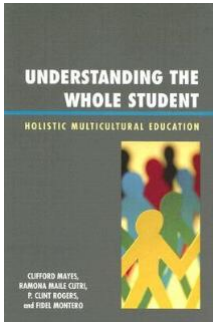


Professional Book Review

Mayes, C., Cutri, R. M., Rogers, P. C., & Montero, F. (2007). *Understanding the whole student: holistic multicultural education (first edition)*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. pp. 204, ISBN: 1578866693 (hc). \$76.68

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“Holistic education stems from the simple yet powerful notion that education, to have profound, healthy, and lasting effects in a student’s life, must try – to the extent practical in any given educational setting with its political institutional constraints – to address various aspects of that student’s being” (Mayes, Cutri, Rogers, & Montero, 2007, p.xi).

Mayes, Cutri, Rogers, and Montero (2007) explained the characteristics of holistic education include the student’s physical nature, emotional dynamics, sociopolitical commitments, styles of learning, ethical convictions, and spiritual commitments. In sum, the key concept of holistic education is focused on the idea of integration – integration of all aspects of a student’s being into a harmonious whole; and integration of various students’ perspectives, needs and abilities in a classroom into a truly cooperative “learning community” (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1988).

The authors expressed holistic education is comprised of Four Holistic Multicultural Domains. These four domains are sensorimotor (physical development), psychosocial (conscious and unconscious relationships between the student and the teacher), cognitive (cultural variations that constitute conceptual “problems”), and ethicospiritual (“how a teacher’s spirituality and pedagogical practices in a multicultural setting can enrich each other in a wide variety of ways”) (pp. 5-6).

This book is divided into two main topics of discussion. Part one discusses terminology, concepts, and theories in the field of the cultural foundations of education. Part two explains important facts, models, and controversies in the field of second language acquisition, with a focus on the acquisition of English as a second language. They provided an extensive “do and don’t” list to rationalize the purpose of this book, and what overall ideas they are not attempting to convey to the reader.

The authors opened the discussion of the book in a way that focused on the foundation of education and learning in a family and societal structure. The authors described the importance of understanding child development, and how culture is a process that develops over time for the individual, and how the individual interprets their personal understanding of culture along with what they are taught. They asserted that culture is learned, culture is in the individual and the individual in the culture, culture is comprised of subcultures, and within the culture there are boundaries and competencies that the individual must learn in order to contribute and adjust appropriately. The authors concluded chapter one with a brief discussion on how a teacher is a cultural negotiator. This is achieved when a teacher “allows students to explore their own and each other’s cultures in a variety of ways that will enliven discussion and enrich the curriculum” (pp. 28).

In chapter two, the authors explored the topics of research, theory, and models regarding second-language acquisition. This chapter examined relationships between language, thought and culture, along with the pedagogical implications of interrelationships. Also in chapter two, the authors introduced *Krashen’s Five Hypotheses about L2 Acquisitions*, *Cummins’ Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills and Common Underlying Proficiency*, and *Colliers’s L1-Maintenance/L2-Development Pedagogy*.

Krashen’s (1982) idea has been highly influential in the training of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers for decades. Krashen’s first hypothesis is the *Acquisition-Learning Distinction*. Krashen claimed that language acquisition is a subconscious process. Krashen’s hypothesis suggested learners are aware they are using the language as communication, and not aware they are acquiring the language. The authors stated that Krashen’s second hypothesis is the *Natural Order Hypothesis*. This hypothesis explained how grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order. The third hypothesis is the *Monitor Hypothesis*, and this is perhaps his best-known hypothesis.

Acquisition “initiates” our utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency. Learning has only one function, and that is as a *monitor* or *editor*. Learning comes

into play only to make changes in the form of our utterance, after it has been “produced” by the acquired system. (Krashen, 1982, p. 15)

Krashen believed the “monitor” can be a problem in the learning process if the student is overconcerned with being correct. Krashen’s fourth hypothesis is the *Input Hypothesis*. The authors stated that this is the most important hypothesis, because it is where the student comprehends most of the language and utterances. Krashen clarified by stating if a student understands most of what is being taught, and they comprehend the information, then they can extrapolate the information they do not fully understand (Krashen, 1982). The final hypothesis is the *Affective Filter Hypothesis*. In this hypothesis, emotional factors affect the process of second language acquisition.

The next concept introduced by the authors was *Cummins’ Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills and Common Underlying Proficiency*. Cummins (1997) discussed proficiency in three aspects; conversational fluency, discrete language skills, and *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS)* (pp. 47). Cummins distinguishes two different types of language proficiency: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS). Cummins simply defined BICS as the simple skills of listening and speaking. These skills are typically learned quickly by students who form language backgrounds similar to English and who also spend time with native speakers. This learning usually takes one to two years to acquire. CALPS is the basis for a child’s ability to cope with the academic demands placed upon her in the various subjects. This process usually takes several years for the student to acquire. Cummins’s Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) is revealed as a process where a child acquires one language skillset that can then be drawn upon, and applied, when working in another language. Cummins’s aspects develop over time and in sequential order. The final component of Cummins’s theory is the *Transfer Hypothesis*, and this process involves thinking and solving tasks in the new language.

The final theorist the authors introduced was *Colliers’s L1-Maintenance/L2-Development Pedagogy*. Colliers’s (1995) work is described by the authors as a synthesis and extension of Krashen’s and Cummins’s work. Colliers believes if a student feels supported emotionally and socially, they will be successful in school and in the community.

The student is learning to be competent in two different languages and the skills that the student possesses in his first language (L1) can enrich his performance in his second language (L2) in various ways, just as the skills he learns in the course of his mastery of his L2 can enrich his understanding of and performance in his L1. (pp. 48)

Throughout the remainder of the book the authors described the Four Holistic Multicultural Domains as it relates to cultures and individuals. The remaining chapters have a common theme of addressing perspectives and predispositions of diverse groups of students, in hopes to understand a concept the authors identify as “good pedagogy”. They identified common themes related to the four domains throughout the remaining chapters: teaching and learning, experience, culture, spirituality, and application in a classroom setting. They also provided examples of the identified domains as it relates specifically to the African American and Native American cultural groups.

The authors concluded the book by restating the identified objectives found in the beginning of the book, and how the book attempted to address those issues. The authors also suggested areas in which this topic needs further research, and the importance of this topics as it relates to education and professional development.

The authors provided information that can be applied to curriculum and instruction in education. The theorists and applied techniques explained in the book can be used to facilitate a multicultural classroom setting. The authors provided thoughtfulness in their writing style to attempt to cover many areas of multiculturalism and different cultural groups in their discussion. The reader is guided in a way that builds understanding of the purpose and rationale for the subject matter, and the relevancy to the field of education. The authors’ topics of discussion provided information and examples to support each domain, and the subcategories under each domain are focused accordingly to the authors’ perceptions of multiculturalism (Dangaci, 2014; Gunay, 2014; Kadioglu, 2014). Throughout the text the authors presented educational and curriculum theorists/theories and applied techniques that can be used to facilitate a multicultural classroom setting. The book is concise, yet the authors were able to provide definitions, history, theories, examples, and in-depth explanations of their identified domains and topics of discussion.

This book has introduced the reader to several foundational concepts related to holistic education and student-centered approaches. It has mainly aimed to provide a general understanding of holistic intervention techniques as it relates to education, while also providing specific examples as they relate to African American and Native American cultural groups. This book has provided a comprehensible explanation of holistic theory and terminology, concepts, facts, models, and controversies in the field of second language acquisition, with a focus on the acquisition of English as a second language. The book aimed to provide a general explanation of holistic education, and as a result, enough information was provided for the reader to feel comfortable implementing these concepts in their own practice.

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