Education in a Changing Society

*The illiterate of the twenty-first century
will not be those who cannot read and write,
but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.*

—Alvin Toffler

Focus Questions

1. What is the rationale for attention to diversity in education?

2. What are some of the fundamental changes influencing American society and the world, including the increase in global terrorism directed at Americans and American interests in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks on America and how might these changes impact you as an educator?

3. What are some differences between schools designed for an industrial age and schools designed for an information or global age?

4. Why is real, substantial change so difficult?

c a s e   s t u d y   **Drew Daniels' Diversity Class**

Drew Daniels wants to be a teacher. He has wanted to be a teacher for almost as long as he can re-member, having worked in local recreation programs, summer camps, and in neighborhood parks coaching younger kids on the basketball courts. He has heard all the arguments against it: it's a difficult and even sometimes a dangerous job; it's only moderately well paying; he could do more with his abilities. But he wants to be a teacher, and that's all there is to it.

Drew Daniels is also a basketball player. He has a full athletic scholarship to the university and hopes to coach basketball in the high school in which he has already been hired to teach mathe-matics in the fall. He has it all planned out: graduation in a few months, spend the summer using his new computer (an early graduation present!) to prepare for his first classes, and finally, finally, starting his new job in a suburban school system on the outer edge of a midwestern city that is just far enough away from his home to give him a needed sense of independence. Algebra . . . geometry . . . calculus . . . even general math—and of course, basketball! He can hardly wait!

Except . . . except, here he is, sitting in a required diversity course, wondering what in the world all this "diversity stuff" has to do with his future. It isn't as if the school district that has already hired him has much of a minority population; the high school principal said something about 20 percent, he thinks. And it isn't as if he has never spent any time with people who are different from himself. His basketball team has black players, a guy from Puerto Rico, one who is Jewish, even a guy who is openly gay. They all get along fine; he knows all their parents and siblings; they will always be friends. And it certainly isn't as if he doesn't already know that some groups of people still suffer from discrimination—some of his community service credits have been spent working with kids in a low-income urban neighborhood, and he spent one whole summer helping build houses in rural Appalachia. He really liked those people, too, and wished he could have done more to help them.

Why, Drew thinks to himself that he could probably teach this course! And anyway, he thinks, I'm going to teach math! Math is math, isn't it? I might have to adjust my lessons for kids who learn in different ways, and some kids are just brighter than others, but after all, everyone needs to know math, don't they? And I know how to use all these new ways to teach math that show kids what math really means. Still, there was that time I spent tutoring in the city; some of those children didn't even speak English! And the kids I met in Kentucky made faces when I said I was going to be a math teacher—as if they hated it! And now it looks as if I might have students with real disabilities in my classes; how do I handle that? I don't even really know anyone with a disability!

Drew is finding that society is changing—in lots of ways. If there is one thing he's learned in the past few years, it's that schools aren't like they used to be, even when he was in school. His aunt teaches sixth grade in a nearby town, and in his class of 25 students, half live in families headed by a single parent (some of them, fathers); one-third are reading below grade level; and one-third are eligible for free lunches. Her class, even in that small town, is far from being an all-white class; she has African American, East Indian, Vietnamese, and Central American children as well as Euro-pean American children. Half of her students are Catholic, one belongs to the local Jehovah's Wit-ness church, two are Muslim, one is Buddhist, and four are Jewish. One child had suffered injuries in an automobile accident and is in a wheelchair, and two children are still waiting (after six months) to be tested to determine their eligibility for the severe behavior disorders class, which is going to be eliminated next year anyway, because the school is going to implement full inclusion. Yes, for sure he will have children with disabilities in his classes.

Activity 1: Mental Maps of Culture: An Ice Breaker

Other changes are taking place as well. His aunt finally has several computers in her classroom and is experimenting with ways to integrate their use into her instruction, and Drew himself is using the Internet and quite a few computer programs in preparing for his classes. In fact, he thinks, I've already found a number of Web sites that have really good ideas for teaching math! But his aunt uses the computer in other ways as well. Since the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States and the subsequent war in Iraq, his aunt has had to teach about things she really never knew much about—such as Islam, cross-cultural relations, and globalization. The computer has enabled her students to reach out to other young people around the world to discuss these issues, even some American students living in the Middle East, while at the same time providing her with the information she needs that is current and not readily available in her textbooks. She and her students can also get up-to-the-minute access to world news. This access certainly makes the morning current events sessions far more engaging.

And today is also the era of proficiency tests, teacher accountability, and No Child Left Behind—in fact, that is what the class is discussing today. "The good news," says the professor, "is that the proponents of accountability want all children to learn. The bad news is that we have never before really tried to educate all children to the same standard, and we are not altogether sure how to do that."

A classmate raises his hand. "What," he asks, "about kids who have really bad family problems, or kids whose parents aren't even there for them? What about kids with ADHD, or kids who just hate school? What about kids who are working 30 hours a week, or kids who just can't 'get it'? What about kids who don't speak English? What about kids who act out in violent ways?"

"Yes," says another classmate, "how are we supposed to teach everyone?"

"Perhaps," says the professor, "we'd be better off asking it another way: how are we to think about our practice of teaching so that everyone learns? The scene has shifted in schools today from an emphasis on teaching to an emphasis on learning. That's what accountability is about, and that's the reason for testing—to see what's been learned. And this change in focus makes it all the more important that we understand differences among students—all kinds of differences, visible and invisible, because those differences may influence a student's learning, and our job is to create a classroom in which everyone learns."

Drew sighs. He really does want to be a teacher, but it seems to be a lot more complicated than he thought it would be. And while the world around him changes rather rapidly, perhaps he, too, will have to make some significant changes if he is going to be as effective an educator as he hopes to be.

The Reality of Social Change

As we get used to living in the twenty-first century, Drew, along with all of us, are witnessing two fundamental social changes that have widespread importance for the future of our country and our schools. The first is a rapid shift in the demographic makeup of our population, and the second is an equally profound shift in the nature of some of our basic institutions such as schools, health care institutions, and social service agencies.

Demographics in Transition

Three factors are of primary importance in the shifting **demographics** of our population. First, immigration from non-European countries currently rivals the great immigrations from Europe that this country experienced at the turn of the twentieth century. There is an

important difference, however. In the early part of the twentieth century, the majority—87 percent—of immigrants arrived from Europe. Except for language, it was relatively easy for these new immigrants to fit into the cultural landscape of the country; after all, many of these people looked similar to the majority of people around them. Today, 85 percent of the roughly one million immigrants who come to the United States each year come from Latin America and Asia (Cortes, 1999). Most look somewhat different from the mainstream, which immediately sets them apart. Indeed, many communities are becoming increasingly international as the phenomenon of globalization extends its reach.

Demographics

Second, birthrates among nonwhite populations are considerably higher than among whites. For European Americans, for instance, birthrates dropped to 1.6 for every two people, well below the 2.1 replacement level. Birthrates for all other groups have remained the same. What this statistic means is that about the time that most current teacher education students were born (the mid to late 1980s), approximately one in four schoolchildren was a child of color (traditionally referred to as minority students). By the year 2020, it is likely that this figure will increase to one child in two, and many of these children will be poor. By mid-century, people of color will be the majority of Americans. In 1998, European Americans became a numerical minority in 243 U.S. counties, with 42 of those counties making the transition since 1994 (Cortes, 1999). And in 1994, in the 25 largest school districts in the United States, children of color comprised about 72 percent of the total school enrollment (NCES, 1997). By 2056, the average U.S. resident, as defined by census statistics, will trace his or her descent to Africa, Asia, the Hispanic world, the Pacific Islands, or the Middle East—almost anywhere but white Europe (U.S. Census, 2000).

Demographics for School Enrollment

Compounding this demographic phenomenon is the academic underachievement of many students of color. For example, the President's Initiative on Race reports the following percentages, or proportions, of the population age 25 to 29 who have finished high school: whites, 93 percent; blacks, 87 percent; and Hispanics, 62 percent. The lower rate among Hispanics reflects lower average levels of education among immigrants, 38 percent of whom were foreign-born in 1997 (PIR, 1998).

Third, the total population of children in relation to adults in the United States is changing as the public grows older. The recent U.S. census reports that although the number of school-age children will increase from now until the year 2025, the number of American youth compared with citizens age 65 and older will continue to shrink (U.S. Census, 2000). An increasing concern is that there will not be enough workers to support the aging baby boom population, who will be a tremendous drain on the nation's social security system at a time when the system itself may be in jeopardy.

Institutions in Transition

The term **social institution** has been defined as a formal, recognized, established, and stabilized way of pursuing some activity in society (Bierstedt, 1974). Another way to define a social institution is to think of it as a set of rules, or **norms,** that enable us to get through the day without having to figure out how to behave toward others, or whether to brush our teeth, or if in fact we should go to school or to work. In this society we have rules that govern the way we interact with family members; friends; people we see often, such as neighbors, teachers, or doctors; and even strangers who fill certain roles—the bus driver, the clerk in the store, the server in a restaurant. We know those rules because we have internalized

them as children, and in a stable society, we can depend on the rules staying relatively the same over time. All societies, even nonliterate ones, create social institutions that govern at least five areas of social need: economics (ways of exchanging goods and services); politics (ways of governing); religion (ways of worshiping one or more deities); the family (ways of ensuring the survival of children); and education (ways of training the younger generation to take over).

In our society, and indeed in most of the world, people are witnessing profound changes in the nature of these basic institutions. Many scholars who study the past as a way to understand the future assert that these changes are so fundamental as to constitute a shift in the very nature of our civilization. Alvin Toffler (1980) was among the first scholar-futurists to warn that our institutions (what is normative in the society) are changing in specific and characteristic ways and to hint at the rise and the effect of globalization on us all. Many of today's changes, Toffler suggests, are neither independent of one another nor random. He identifies a number of events that seem to be independent from one another, such as the breakdown of the nuclear family, the global energy crisis, the spread of cults and cable television, the changes in employment options, and the emergence of separatist movements from within national borders of many nations, suggesting that the reverse, may, in fact, be true. These and many other seemingly unrelated events are interconnected, and may be part of a much larger phenomenon that he sees as the death of industrialism and the rise of a new civilization.

Prior to September 11, 2001, it was relatively easy to fall prey to exaggerated notions of the future. Today, Toffler's views are more than a little intriguing. Clearly, all our institutions are showing signs of transition, and the direction seems to be toward increased choice, increased diversity, and increased interdependency. Consider for a moment four of these five social institutions as they manifest themselves today (Education is discussed in its own section as well as throughout the book).

Alvin Toffler

Economics and Politics

For most of our nation's history, the American economy has been based on manufacturing done by companies whose production could be found within the borders of the country. The norm was that folks went to work for a particular company and stayed there throughout their working lives. Indeed, as recently as thirty years ago, people who changed jobs too many times were considered quite undependable. Today, our economy is firmly global in both scale and attitude; workers frequently change jobs (often because their companies are moving production to another country, but also often to enhance their own prospects); and it is more the norm not to work for the same company for thirty years. Indeed, the much-revered American corporation can hardly be said to exist any longer: the acquisition of raw material, manufacturing processes, and distribution of goods by such giants as Ford Motor Company, General Motors, or General Electric is done worldwide. In large measure because of advances in computer technology and high-speed travel, we find ourselves looking more and more often beyond our own borders for goods and services. Robert Reich (1992), former Secretary of Labor, describes the situation in the following terms:

Consider some examples: Precision ice hockey equipment is designed in Sweden, financed in Canada, and assembled in Cleveland and Denmark for distribution in North America and Europe, respectively, out of alloys whose molecular structure was researched and patented in Delaware and

fabricated in Japan. An advertising campaign is conceived in Britain; film footage for it is shot in Canada, dubbed in Britain, and edited in New York. A sports car is financed in Japan, designed in Italy, and assembled in Indiana, Mexico, and France, using advanced electronic components invented in New Jersey and fabricated in Japan. A microprocessor is designed in California and financed in America and West Germany, containing dynamic random-access memories fabricated in South Korea. A jet airplane is designed in the state of Washington and in Japan, and assembled in Seattle, with special tail sections from China and Italy, and engines from Britain. A space satellite designed in California, manufactured in France, and financed by Australians is launched from a rocket made in the Soviet Union. Which of these is an American product? Which is foreign? How does one decide? Does it matter? (p. 112)

Such economic realities have their counterparts in the political sphere as well. As we increasingly interact with people from other nations in matters of trade, we also increasingly interact with them politically, and political events occurring in other countries have a much more profound effect on our own political agenda than they used to. For example, the realization of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) Treaty—as well as GATT's successor, The World Trade Organization—are political and economic responses to the facts of international trade. The end of the Cold War was a defining feature of international politics as the twentieth century drew to a close (see Chapter 7). Today, at the brink of the twenty-first century, the recurring ethnic and religious wars around the world, as well as the recent terrorist attacks on American soil and Western interests around the world, are new realities with which the United States must contend. Clearly, a day does not go by without some news of our entanglement with other countries that has political consequences for the United States. The norms have changed; we do economics and politics differently.

Issues surrounding economics and power also come into discussion on the domestic scene. Increasingly called into question is the recognition by many that in American society certain individuals have privilege and power simply because of the groups to which they belong. Often referred to as **white privilege,** the benefits and opportunities that come easily to some by virtue of their ethnicity or race are often wrongly assumed to be as a result of aptitude, attitude, and hard work. Understanding this phenomenon, and seeking ways to redress this condition, become increasingly important (and is discussed further in Chapter 6).

Marriage and Family Life

In the family we are also witnessing profound changes in structure and organization. Recent research on the changing demographics of our families graphically portrays the changing nature of family life. For instance, in 1942, 60 percent of families were described as nuclear families consisting of two parents and their children. Furthermore, if you believe the images that until recently were often portrayed in basal readers, this nuclear family included a dog and a cat all living happily together in a white house surrounded by a neat picket fence. In these families, the father's role was to leave home every day to earn the money to support the family, and the mother's role was to stay at home and raise the children. Those images were the norms. Today, less than 10 percent of American families match that ideal. The norms have changed.

It is estimated today that about half of all marriages in the United States will be disrupted through divorce or separation. More than ten different configurations are represented by the families of children in today's classrooms—a most significant one being the

single-parent family, often a mother and child or children living in poverty. Increasingly, this single parent is a teenage mother. Another increasing family configuration is one in which two adults of the same sex, committed to one another over time, are raising children who may be biologically related to one or the other adult, or may be adopted by them. This is a hotly debated topic.

There has also been a corresponding increase in intermarriage between individuals from different ethnic or religious groups. Nearly one-third of Latinos born in the United States, for instance, now intermarry, as do about 10 percent of African Americans. In some Asian American groups (Japanese Americans, for instance), more people marry outside the group than marry within the group (Cortes, 1999), and roughly 50 percent of American Jews marry outside their religion. For the first time in our history, the 2000 census allowed people to identify themselves with multiple race identification (U.S. Census data online, 2001). Although 2.4 percent of the population identified themselves as mixed, it is estimated that at least 40 percent of the American citizenry has some racial mixing in the last three generations, including former President Bill Clinton and Martin Luther King (Hodgkinson, 2000). Children of these mixed marriages will increasingly fill our schools, as is evident in the 6.8 percent of young people under the age of 18 who claimed similar multiple racial identity.

Consider also some of these facts derived about children from the Children's Defense Fund (2003): one in three children is born to unmarried parents, half will live in a single parent family at some point in childhood, one in four lives with only one parent, one in eight is born to a teenage mother, one in 13 was born with low birthweight, one in 15 lives at less than half the poverty level, one in 24 lives with neither parent, one in 60 sees their parents divorce in any year, one in 139 will die before their first birthday, and one in 1,056 will be killed by guns before age 20. In addition, one in five was born poor, one in three will be poor at some point in their childhood, and one in six is born to a mother who did not receive prenatal care in the first three months of pregnancy. One in five is born to a mother who did not graduate from high school, one in five has a foreign-born mother, one in three is behind a year or more in school, two in five never complete a single year of college, one in seven has no health insurance, one in seven has at least one worker in their family but still is poor, one in eight lives in a family receiving food stamps, one in eight never graduates from high school, and one in 12 has a disability. Clearly, the family pattern that was once considered the norm and provided the image of the "right" and "proper" family and guided the policies of our other institutions has changed.

Organized Religion

In times of transition such as we are experiencing, organized religion can serve as a stabilizing influence. Here too, however, the institutionalized churches of all faiths are undergoing change. Once largely a nation steeped in the Judeo-Christian heritage, the United States is now home to a growing number of faiths that are unfamiliar to many people. Buddhism, Islam, and other religions of the East and Middle East are growing as new immigrants bring their religious ideas with them, with Islam being among the fastest growing religions in the nation. Similarly, a wide variety of relatively small but active congregations built around scientific, philosophical, and psychological ideas are appearing to proliferate—the so-called

New Age religious sects. At the same time, conservative branches of mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim religions serve as havens for people for whom social change seems too rapid and too chaotic, and fundamentalist denominations (usually Protestant) are the fastest growing religious organizations in the nation. Indeed, the tension between so-called liberal and conservative elements in the organized church may become one of the most profound social conflicts of contemporary life.

Schools as a Reflection of Social Change

Demographics

All the institutional changes discussed thus far are inevitably reflected in the institution of schooling—its purposes, policies, and practices. For example, the demographic statistics, cited in the previous section that reflect the total population of the United States are first seen in our schools. It is projected that by the year 2040, children of color will comprise more than half the children in classrooms, up from approximately one-third at the beginning of the twenty-first century (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). Startling changes are already occurring in a number of places in the country. For example, more than a decade ago, students from so-called minority groups comprised more than 50 percent of the school populations in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and New York. In these states, minority children may find themselves in the uncomfortable position of being the majority in a world whose rules are set by a more powerful minority. And recent census figures for California show that there is currently no majority cultural group in the state!

Language

Along with ethnic and racial diversity often comes linguistic diversity. For the first time in our history, the 2000 Census Bureau printed questionnaires in languages other than English, including Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Tagalog (the major language of the Philippines). Increasing numbers of children are entering school from minority language backgrounds and have little or no competence in the English language. Recent demographics suggest that nearly one in five Americans, some 47 million individuals age 5 and older, speak a language other than English at home, reflecting an increase of nearly 50 percent during the past decade (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). It is estimated that there are between 2 million and 3.3 million Potentially English Proficient (PEP) students in schools in the United States—73 percent of whom speak Spanish as their primary language (Baca, 2000), making the United States the fifth largest Spanish-speaking country in the world. While 67 percent of these students can be found in the five states of California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois, most school districts in the country have PEP students. Spanish is the most common second language spoken in America's classroom, but an increasing number of students are entering the schools speaking Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hmong, Khmer, Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese. More than 50 percent of PEP students are in grades K–4, with 77 percent coming from poor backgrounds. A relatively high dropout rate characterizes this group of children—in spite of all our efforts at bilingual education. Since a person's language provides the symbols used to understand the world, children whose symbol systems differ from those of the dominant group are likely to see the world from a different

perspective, to look for meaning in different ways, and to attribute different meanings to common objects and processes. Although these students may be perceived as a challenge to our educational system in the years ahead, one consequence of successfully accommodating this diversity is that all of us—students, teachers, and communities alike—will become more knowledgeable, more accepting, and better skilled at communicating with people from different backgrounds.

Ability

Life in classrooms is different in other ways as well. Before the enactment of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142), more than 1 million children with disabilities were excluded from public school because the community (or state) had not yet taken any responsibility for their welfare or education. In addition, many who were in school were given inappropriate labels and were segregated from their peers. With amendments enacted in 1990, 1992, and 1997, the law was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and significant changes were made in the law that now affect not only children but all students through the age of 21. As a result of Public Law 94-142 and its successors, students with a variety of disabilities now spend increasing amounts of time in traditional classrooms while still receiving the services they need. Indeed, some schools are becoming all-inclusion schools, and the preparation of special education teachers is also changing in a number of states, reflecting the changing role of those teachers in schools where students with disabilities spend most of their time in regular classrooms. The trend today is toward more inclusion, which enables students with disabilities to be educated side-by-side with their nondisabled peers. While this arrangement benefits students with special needs, the benefits are not one-sided. Children do learn from each other, and students with disabilities also have abilities to share.

Gender

Over the last few decades there has emerged an increasing awareness in many classrooms of a difference among children that is so fundamental that it has been overlooked as a matter of inquiry throughout most of our history. That difference is gender. Because we have included both girls and boys, at least in elementary education, since the very beginning of the common school, and because our political and educational ideals assume that school is gender neutral, the effect of gender on children's education has not been analyzed until recently. In the last thirty years, however, considerable research has been done on differences in the social and educational lives of boys and girls in school (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2002; Ali, 2004). Shakeshaft (1986, p. 55) writes:

> Two messages emerge repeatedly from the research on gender and schooling. First, what is good for males is not necessarily good for females. Second, if a choice must be made, the education establishment will base policy and instruction on that which is good for males.

For the most part, girls have not been considered educationally different from boys. Yet the experiences of girls in school are in many ways quite different from the experiences of boys. Also, the educational outcomes of girls differ from those of boys. In short, girls who sit in the same classrooms as boys, read the same materials as boys, do the same homework as boys, and take the same examinations as boys, often are not treated in the same ways as boys and consequently may not achieve the same educational outcomes as boys do.

Students and Teachers: A Clash of Cultures?

There exists a considerable discrepancy between the makeup of the student population in most schools and that of the teaching force. Most of our nation's teachers continue to come from a rather homogeneous group, with approximately 88 to 90 percent being European American and middle class. Indeed, the profile of the teacher education student that emerged from Zimpher's (1989) study has not appreciably changed. Typically, the teacher education student is a monolingual white female from a low-middle or middle-class suburban or rural home who wants to teach children who are just like herself. Women outnumber men by three-to-one in the teaching force, with nearly two-thirds of Pre K–6 teachers being women (male teachers in grades 7 to 12 do outnumber female teachers two-to-one).

These figures contrast sharply with the student diversity that currently exists in schools and that is projected to increase in the years ahead. A considerable number of children are thus missing important role models who represent their background within the school setting—boys in the early years, and children of color throughout the educational experience in general. Majority students as well miss having role models who represent groups other than their own.

Equally critical is the fact that teachers (like many other people) tend to be culture bound, to have little knowledge or experience of people from other cultures, which of course limits their ability to interact effectively with students who are different from themselves. Indeed, in Zimpher's study, 69 percent of white teacher education students reported spending all or most of their free time with people of their own racial or ethnic background. This, too, has not changed appreciably in recent years. More disturbing, this same study reported that a substantial number of teacher education students do not believe that low-income and minority learners are capable of grasping high-level concepts in the subjects they are preparing to teach. Finally, the traditional identification of teaching as women's work means that even multiculturally sophisticated teachers are usually powerless to make their school's culture more accommodating to female and underrepresented students because it is usually white males who are in key decision-making roles.

Rethinking Schools and Learning: The Effort to Reform Our Schools

In terms of traditional definitions of social order, it appears that most of our social institutions are not working very well in the beginning of this new millennium. Another way to state this observation is to say that the norms governed by our institutions have changed. In this context, the principal values of democratic equality, liberty, and community are once again called into question. What does equality mean when people from a variety of cultures around the world are competing for the same jobs? What does liberty mean when language barriers prevent common understanding? What does community mean when allegiance to one's group prevents commonality with people in other groups?

Some scholars have argued that the changes we are experiencing require a shift from the ideals of a Jeffersonian political democracy (in which democratic principles are defined by individualism) to the ideals of a cultural democracy in which democratic principles are defined by cultural pluralism (McClelland and Bernier, 1993). Such a shift involves a radical

change in our beliefs about how we are to get along with one another, what kinds of information and skills we need to develop, and how we are to interpret our national ideals and goals. Among other changes, this cultural view of democracy requires a fundamental rethinking of our national goals and how we structure or organize schools in relation to those goals. Schooling is, after all, the institution charged not only with imparting necessary information and skills but also with ensuring that young people develop long-cherished democratic attitudes and values. Although schooling alone cannot completely alter the larger society in which it exists, schooling can influence as well as reflect its parent society. And since teachers can engender or stifle new ideas and new ways of doing things with their students, they are in a position to influence both the direction and pace of change in our society.

As Drew is learning in his teacher education program, one of the most significant results of rethinking schools and teaching is the testing and accountability movement. Although there is considerable debate about both the means and ends of the movement, taken at face value it signals a major change not only in the way we think about schools but also in the way we think about teaching and learning. It is no longer acceptable to eliminate certain children from the ranks of the educable. Nor is it acceptable to think that it's all right if some children don't measure up to standards, or that you just can't "teach everyone." Indeed, the emphasis is now squarely on learning outcomes for *all* children.

Fortunately, there are teachers who accept this challenge and are learning to think about their practice in more inclusive ways. They work in classrooms in all regions of the country, sometimes alone and sometimes with colleagues who are also excited about new possibilities. They work with students of all backgrounds: white and nonwhite, wealthy and poor, boys and girls, rural and urban. They work with students of varied religions and of no particular religion, with students who have vastly different abilities, and with students who have different sexual orientations. They work in wealthy districts that spend a great deal of money on each student and in poor districts that have little in the way of resources. And most importantly, their classrooms reflect their belief that all children can succeed.

Schools in Transition

Twenty-first-century schools and classrooms, in which teachers must learn to see change as an opportunity rather than a problem, and difference as a resource rather than a deficit, are fundamentally different from the traditional schools and classrooms that characterized nineteenth- and twentieth-century America. Underlying these differences in past and future schools are fundamental differences in the larger society in which schools are found. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, most schools were designed to reflect the emerging industrial (factory) mode of organization. Toffler refers to this era as the "Second Wave Civilization" to distinguish it from its predecessor, the agrarian era, or "First Wave Civilization." Central to this industrial Second Wave Civilization, also often referred to as the "factory model," are the ideas of *standardization, synchronization, specialization, centralization, and bigness*. Conversely, the organizational model that is emerging as we enter the information and global age of the twenty-first century, which Toffler refers to as "Third Wave Civilization," differs sharply from its predecessor. Central to this model are the ideas of *individualization and choice* rather than standardization, *decentralization* rather than

centralization, *diversity* rather than specialization, and *smallness* rather than bigness. The next two sections take a closer look at how the current progression from the industrial age to the information age is likely to influence the nature of twenty-first-century schooling and teaching. The text then examines where today's schools are in relation to this transition and the primary obstacles that must be dealt with as the change proceeds.

Characteristics of Classrooms for the Industrial (Factory) Age, or Second Wave

In industrial-age schools, administrators are viewed as bosses, teachers as workers (or wardens), and students as raw material. The work of teachers is to lecture, ask questions, and give directions that will produce students who meet the vocational and citizenship needs of the society. Students, as befitting raw material, are largely passive.

Standardization

Standardization is important in Second Wave schools. Teachers and other school personnel are hired based on well-defined standards of certification. Standards of dress and behavior for both school personnel and students are enforced through well-publicized, standardized rules. Curriculum is based largely on standardized textbooks and on a districtwide standardized course of study that each teacher is expected to follow. Standards of performance for students and teachers are well-defined, and grades reflect a student's ability to learn standardized lessons as demonstrated through standardized paper-and-pencil tests. Competition for grades is encouraged, and work is normally done individually. "Keep your eyes on your own paper" and "Don't talk to your neighbors" are common statements made by teachers to reinforce ideals of individualism and competition. It is expected, and therefore accepted, that some students, being poorer raw material, will fail.

Children are initially grouped by age in standard grade levels without regard to individual development. Children who do not fit a particular grade level are either put down a grade level, kept back for a year, occasionally advanced a grade, or placed in remedial or special classes. In the past, the last option was likely to continue throughout the course of a child's schooling. Print is the instructional media of choice, while the use of art, music, drama, video, computers, and other alternative media is considered an extra if it is considered at all.

Synchronization

In Second Wave schools the synchronization of time is a major part of the school structure. The school year lasts a certain number of days. There is a time to come to school and a time to leave. Classes last for a certain number of minutes. Indeed, in some states, time allotments per subject per week are mandated by the state department of education. Special events like field trips and assemblies are carefully scheduled so as to offer the least interference with the standard school day.

Specialization

Specialization is also a central element of Second Wave schools. In elementary school, specialized subject areas are taught separately throughout the day. Above the elementary grades, knowledge is divided into disciplines and offered in specialized courses by different

teachers separated from one another by physical distance, time, and often a hierarchy of value. Home economics, vocational education, music, and art, for example, are not valued as highly as mathematics, English, and science. Roles in Second Wave schools are also specialized. Administrators perform certain tasks, teachers perform other tasks. Teachers in secondary schools teach only certain subjects, whereas special teachers teach only special students. Other professional and nonprofessional staff (nurses, counselors, custodians) perform still other tasks.

Centralization

Similarly, Second Wave schools are highly centralized. Most rules and customs are decided by centralized district staff who usually work out of what is accurately called the *central office*. Curriculum decisions, budgets, purchasing, and school policies regarding attendance, discipline, acceptable teaching practices, and annual scheduling are effected from a centralized point. For students receiving special education, such responsibilities are administered separately, as a centralized system-within-a-system.

Large Scale

An inclination toward bigness is also characteristic of Second Wave schools, particularly at the secondary level. It's an old American belief that "bigger is better," and the belief applies to almost all aspects of schools except class size, where the norm is about 25 students per class. An elementary principal once said, sadly, "Every time my school population declines to its most educable level—about 300 students—the district talks about consolidating us with another school." Educators know from experience that the larger a school is, the more impersonal it becomes, the less chance there is for the school to become a community, and the more students will "fall through the cracks." Nevertheless, for financial reasons, consolidation of small schools is a major trend in the United States. Finally, most people seem attracted to the idea of bigness—and refer to a big football team, a big band, a big choir, or a big building.

Reich (1992) describes the school that expresses a desire to fit students for an industrial, mass-production society:

> Children [move] from grade to grade through a preplanned sequence of standard subjects, as if on factory conveyor belts. At each state, certain facts [are] poured into their heads. Children with the greatest capacity to absorb the facts, and with the most submissive demeanor, [are] placed on a rapid track through the sequence; those with the least capacity for fact retention and self-discipline, on the slowest. Most children [end] up on a conveyor belt of medium speed. Standardized tests [are] routinely administered at certain checkpoints in order to measure how many of the facts [have] stuck in the small heads, and product defects [are] taken off the line and returned for retooling. As in the mass-production system, discipline and order [are] emphasized above all else. (pp. 59–60)

Characteristics of Classrooms for the Information Age, or Third Wave

The model for Third Wave, or information-age, schools and classrooms is not the factory, it is the learning community. In learning communities, teachers, students, support staff, parents, administrators, and others who are involved in the school from time to time are viewed as members of a single community, whose common purpose, for everyone,

is learning. Learning is defined not only as the acquisition of factual knowledge but also as the development of critical thinking skills and the ability to apply knowledge in varied situations (problem solving). Emphasis is placed not only on the acquisition of information and skills, but also on the *understanding* of their theoretical and research base. In such an atmosphere, *why* is often a more important question than *what*, and the *process* of learning—how material is structured and is presented to help students learn—is considered an important issue.

Individualization and Choice

Individualization and choice increasingly characterize Third Wave classrooms. Teachers and students often decide together, within a broad curricular framework, what to study and how to study it, what materials are required, what rules are needed, and how much time is given to various activities. Such collaboration enables teachers to share their individual knowledge and skills. Students and teachers are viewed as resources, each with unique contributions to the learning community.

Collaboration

As befits a community, tasks are often accomplished by people working together, using what they already know and figuring out what they need to know and how to get it. Since the primary goal of the community is learning, not sorting out those who have learned from those who have not, everyone's knowledge is put to use in the service of that goal. It is expected, and accepted, that everyone will learn and contribute to the learning of others. Cooperation is emphasized, and competition is reduced to an occasional activity. Mistakes are accepted and considered instructive, so the logical next step after failure is to try again. Some of these schools and classrooms abandoned letter grades in favor of narrative progress reports or portfolio assessment. Where grades are given, they are sometimes given to groups rather than to individuals and, in any case, are used more as a measure of progress rather than a measure of the person.

In learning communities it is understood that children learn at different rates. Standardized grade levels are sometimes abandoned in favor of mixed age or ability groupings. Where grade levels are maintained, mixed age and ability groupings are often used for part of the day so that older or more advanced students can help those who are younger or less advanced. One way to accomplish this mixing is to block part of the day so that all students are simultaneously working on math or some other subject in different parts of the school. Another way is to organize learning in an individual classroom around small group projects, which allows students to collaborate in solving some problems. In this case, the acquisition of knowledge becomes a means to accomplishing the project. Still another community strategy is to study a particular object from an interdisciplinary point of view, utilizing knowledge from science, art, music, history, language arts, mathematics, and so forth to further understanding. For example, a unit on food production might integrate content from the sciences (plant growth), social studies (geography, economics, anthropology), language arts (writing from the perspective of a farmer), health (preservation and/or safety of food), music (production of advertising jingles), and art (marketing and advertising). In most learning communities, all three strategies are present, sometimes sequentially and sometimes simultaneously.

Diversity

It is also understood in learning communities that everyone (students, teachers, support staff) has his or her own unique characteristics. Individuals learn, teach, and interact in any number of ways, depending on their innate characteristics and cultural conditioning. Such social diversity is viewed as normal rather than deviant and as enriching rather than dividing the community. Consequently, in such schools and classrooms, social and physical differences are explicitly acknowledged and appreciated. This attitude has some important educational consequences.

First, a continuing effort is made to help all children understand and appreciate the characteristics of those who differ from themselves. Second, the tools of such understanding and appreciation—the skills of questioning, negotiating, and conflict resolution—are explicitly taught as a part of the ongoing routines of the day. And perhaps most importantly, teaching is seen as a process of adapting to different styles and needs.

Because learning communities are likely to "mix up" traditional divisions of age, time, and disciplines, both adults and children in the school are likely to find themselves working outside their normal age groups and knowledge specialties. Thus, everyone in the school, both adults and students, may serve as resources to one another. Students may find themselves working with many different adults and a wide variety of other students.

Decentralization

Because people in learning community schools and classrooms think of themselves as decision makers, the organization of these schools and classrooms is to a large measure decentralized. That is, the goals and objectives of learning are less dictated by external or centralized personnel and more directed by the participants themselves. Such decentralization is also applied to budgeting, attendance and dress policies, hiring of staff, and so forth. In many schools, this process is called *site-based management,* that is, the community's decision making is done on-site by those who will perform, and be most affected by, these actions.

Small Scale

Finally, learning communities tend to be small enough to enable everyone to know everyone else reasonably well and to engage in the kind of face-to-face interaction that characterizes most communities. This issue of scale may be addressed in a variety of ways. In some schools, enrollment is deliberately kept low. In larger schools that are formed for cost-saving purposes, students and teachers are often divided into schools-within-schools. For example, three or four teachers in an elementary school may teach 75 to 100 children, or five or six subject-area teachers may teach 150 high school students. Students select a subject area, such as technology or global studies, and become part of a smaller group of students and faculty within the school. In recent years, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provided support funds to set up small learning communities within large, mostly urban high schools. This arrangement permits greater flexibility and creativity that comes with smaller scale organization. The ultimate goal in all cases is to enable both children and adults to feel a sense of belonging to the community and a sense of responsibility for its welfare.

Where We Are Today

As we begin the transition to the twenty-first century and the information age, schools too are in transition. Few schools today can be described as being entirely Second Wave or entirely Third Wave in their organization and governance. Rather, most schools are somewhere between the two models. Furthermore, the Third Wave school is not entirely new. Some of its elements, such as cross-age grouping and the learning community atmosphere, have historical roots that go back to the one-room schoolhouse of the nineteenth century. What seems to separate the school as a learning community from the school as a factory are the characteristics associated with each model. And those characteristics in turn depend largely on the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the people who comprise the entity we call *school*.

The Difficulty of Change

Change is difficult, particularly when it deals with the fundamental beliefs, attitudes, and values around which we organize our lives. Attempts at such change often result in hostility or in an effort to preserve, at any cost, our familiar ways of doing things and thinking about the world around us. The universal nature of such resistance to change is illustrated in the following parable.

A Parable

Once upon a time there was a group of people who lived in the mountains in an isolated region. One day a stranger passed through their area and dropped some wheat grains in their field. The wheat grew. After a number of years, people noticed the new plant and decided to collect its seeds and chew them. Someone noticed that when a cart had accidentally ridden over some of the seeds, a harder outer covering separated from the seed and what was inside was sweeter. Someone else noticed that when it rained, the grains that had been run over expanded a little, and the hot sun cooked them. So, people started making wheat cereal and cracked wheat and other wheat dishes. Wheat became the staple of their diet.

Years passed. Because these people did not know anything about crop rotation, fertilizers, and cross-pollination, the wheat crop eventually began to fail.

About this time, another stranger happened by. He was carrying two sacks of barley. He saw the people starving and planted some of his grain. The barley grew well. He presented it to the people and showed them how to make bread and soup and many other dishes from barley. But they called him a heretic.

"You are trying to undermine our way of life and force us into accepting you as our king." They saw his trick. "You can't fool us.

You are trying to weaken us and make us accept your ways. Our wheat will not let us starve. Your barley is evil."

He stayed in the area, but the people avoided him. Years passed. The wheat crop failed again and again. The children suffered from malnutrition. One day the stranger came to the market and said, "Wheat is a grain. My barley has a similar quality. It is also a grain. Why don't we just call the barley grain?"

Now since they were suffering so much, the people took the grain, except for a few who staunchly refused. They loudly proclaimed that they were the only remaining followers of the True Way, the Religion of Wheat. A few new people joined the Wheat Religion from time to time, but most began to eat barley. They called themselves The Grainers.

For generations, the Wheat Religion people brought up their children to remember the true food called wheat. A few of them hoarded some wheat grains to keep it safe and sacred. Others sent their children off in search of wheat, because they felt that if one person could happen by with barley, wheat might be known somewhere else too.

And so it went for decades, until the barley crop began to fail. The last few Wheat Religion people planted their wheat again. It grew beautifully, and because it grew so well, they grew bold and began to proclaim that their wheat was the only true food. Most people resisted and called them heretics. A few people said, "Why don't you just admit that wheat is a grain?"

The wheat growers agreed, thinking that they could get many more wheat followers if they called it grain. But by this time, some of the children of the Wheat Religion people began to return from their adventures with new seed, not just wheat, but rye and buckwheat and millet. Now people began to enjoy the taste of many different grains. They took turns planting them and trading the seed with each other. In this way, everyone came to have enough sustenance and lived happily ever after.

This parable carries many metaphorical messages: it applauds diversity and recognizes that a society cannot function to its fullest when it ignores the ideas, contributions, efforts, and concerns of any of its people; it illustrates some of the consequences of unreasonable prejudice but also recognizes the powerful emotions that underlie a prejudiced attitude. It also indicates the power of naming something in a way that is familiar and comfortable to those who are uncomfortable about accepting something new.

But perhaps most importantly, the parable recognizes the tendency people have to resist change. People are creatures of habit who find it difficult to change, whether at the

individual level, the institutional level, or the societal level. People often work from one set of assumptions, one pattern of behavior. Because of the way in which people are socialized, these habits of thought and behavior are so much a part of them that they find it very difficult to think that things can be done in any other way. Some habits people develop are positive and constructive; others are negative and limiting. The story shows us that sometimes even a society's strengths can become weaknesses. And yet new circumstances and opportunities arise in each generation that demand that new perspectives, attitudes, and solutions be sought. Such circumstances are evident today in the changing face of the American classroom, and much of the responsibility for change must lie with teachers and teacher educators.

How prepared are *you* to accept the reality of change? And how ready are *you* to examine some of your own beliefs and ideas about others? About yourself? About how *you* can interact with others? Are you at a point where, like Drew in the case study, you can begin to see how critical it is that you may have to change?

Ideological Perspectives on Multicultural Education

Attention to social differences among students has a relatively long history in this society, beginning at least with the arguments for the common school (which was intended to give students of different social class backgrounds a "common" educational experience that would enable the society to continue to be governed by "we, the people"). During some periods of our history, the focus was also on assimilation to a "common culture," by which was meant a dominant, largely Anglo society. During other periods—notably in the early years of the twentieth century, when Black scholars began to develop curricular materials on the African American experience in America, and in the 1940s, when the Intergroup Education movement had as its main objective the reduction of prejudice and discrimination in the U.S. population—various attempts have been made to perceive difference as a strength rather than as a problem (Grant and Ladson-Billings, 1997).

The field now known as multicultural education emerged in the aftermath of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, first with the ethnic studies movement and later with a somewhat broader "multicultural" education effort. Within that effort (and outside it as well), there are a variety of perspectives on both the definition and goals of multicultural education (which will be discussed in greater detail later in the book). Essentially, **multicultural education** is defined as a process of educational reform that ensures that students from all groups (racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, ability, gender, etc.) experience educational equality, success, and social mobility.

Multicultural Education

Some important questions emerge from what is in fact a healthy debate about our ability to provide educational opportunity and success for *all* children. Some of these questions existed from the beginning; others emerge as knowledge increases and times change. Consider the following:

Is multicultural education for everyone, or for minority students alone?

Should multicultural education focus on the individual student, on the student as a member of a group, or on both?

If multicultural education focuses on the study of group identity and experience, which groups shall be included?

To what extent should multicultural education include the study of relationships of power along with the history and contributions of all people?

Is multicultural education academic or political, or both?

Will multicultural education, as an ideological movement, divide us as a people or bring us closer together?

Are multicultural teaching practices good for everyone?

To what extent should multicultural education have as a goal the reconstruction of the whole society?

Is multicultural education centered on domestic (i.e., American) issues of diversity, or should it take as its central idea a more global understanding of difference?

All of these questions are important, in part because they are inexorably related. Given the interdependent nature of the world in which we live, it is becoming less and less possible to think about purely American (or to be more accurate, United States) issues of difference. If the students being taught happen to belong mostly to one group or another, it is still the case that all of them, at some point in their lives, will need to learn how to understand and work with those who are different from themselves. If you think that local issues of inequality, poverty, and unequal access to education, housing, and jobs are central to Americans' work concerns, consider that well over half the world's population is struggling with the same issues (Cushner, 1998). Americans work to preserve and protect democratic institutions in this society whereas millions of people around the world try to understand what democracy really is.

Multicultural education, both as an organized field of study and practice and as an ideological perspective, has witnessed a continued broadening of its scope and interests over the years. Increasingly, the field and its ideologies are turning toward a more global sensibility. This change does not mean that local or national issues are no longer important; it means that what Americans have and continue to learn locally have important implications for global action. It also means that, inasmuch as we are not the only society struggling with issues of difference, there is much we can learn from others around the world. For instance, what can we learn from the French as they struggle with the question of whether or not to allow Muslim girls to wear the hijab, or head scarf, in public schools? Or, what can we learn from the way Arabs and Jews are portrayed in textbooks in Palestinian and Israeli schools?

This book is based in part on a notion of intercultural interactions and their cognitive, emotional, and developmental aspects. An intercultural interaction can be domestic; that is, between two (or more) people within the same nation that come from different cultural backgrounds; or it can be international, between two (or more) people from different countries. The cultural identity of the parties involved in an interaction may come from a limited and mutually reinforcing set of experiences or from more complex and sometimes conflicting elements. The significant difference in an interaction may be race or class or religion or gender or language or sexual orientation; it may be physical or attitudinal in origin; it may be age-related or status-related or any combination of these.

Regardless of the *kind* of differences involved, all people tend to approach significant differences in similar, often negative, ways. That is, to understand the processes involved is a first step toward overcoming these differences; and *both* culture-specific knowledge and culture-general knowledge are prerequisites on the road to social justice.

Goals of This Book

This book is about change and diversity. It is about teaching all children in a society that is growing more diverse each year. It is about changes in classrooms and in the act of teaching within those classrooms. It is about changes in schools and in the larger society in which these schools are embedded. It is equally about change within oneself, for change in the larger dimensions of society cannot occur without significant changes in one's own perception, attitudes, and skills. All these environments (self, classrooms, schools, and society) are connected, so that changes in any one of them produce disequilibrium and change in the others. Their connectedness and the mutual influence that each one exerts on the others is visually depicted in Figure 1.1.

As a teacher in the twenty-first century, you will spend your career in ever-changing schools, schools whose mission will be to help society make an orderly transition from a
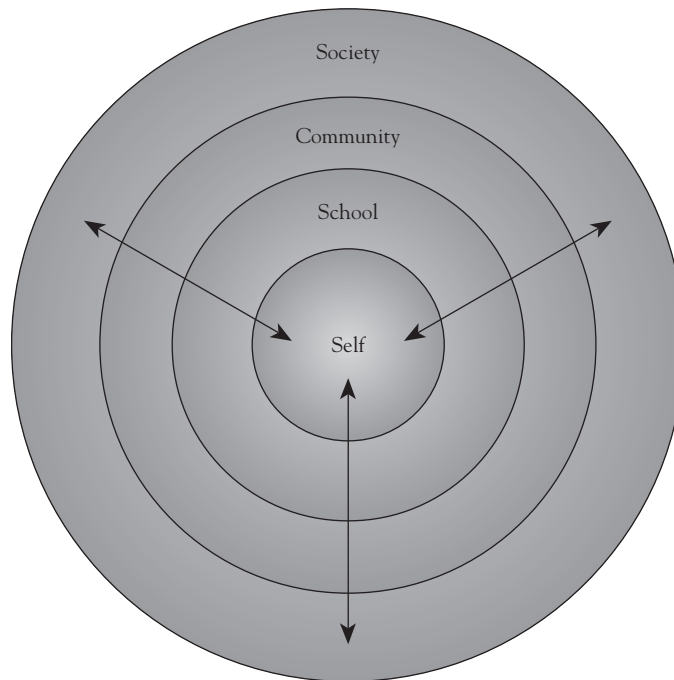

figure 1.1   Interconnected environments.

Second Wave civilization to a Third Wave civilization that is more inclusive. Your ability to feel comfortable and operate effectively within such a changing environment will require a unique set of cultural understandings and interpersonal skills that go beyond traditional pedagogy. These skills, perspectives, and attitudes that you as a teacher must adopt in order to coalesce diverse students into an effective learning community must also be transmitted to the students in your charge, who will live their lives in the same kind of highly inter-connected and interdependent world. You are thus walking both sides of a double-edged sword, so to speak. The process that you undergo to become more effective working across cultures must ultimately become course content that you teach to students. This feat will not be easy!

     Figure 1.2 illustrates four basic goals of this book, which can be viewed as steps in understanding multicultural education and your role as an educator in an inclusive system. A word about each goal follows.
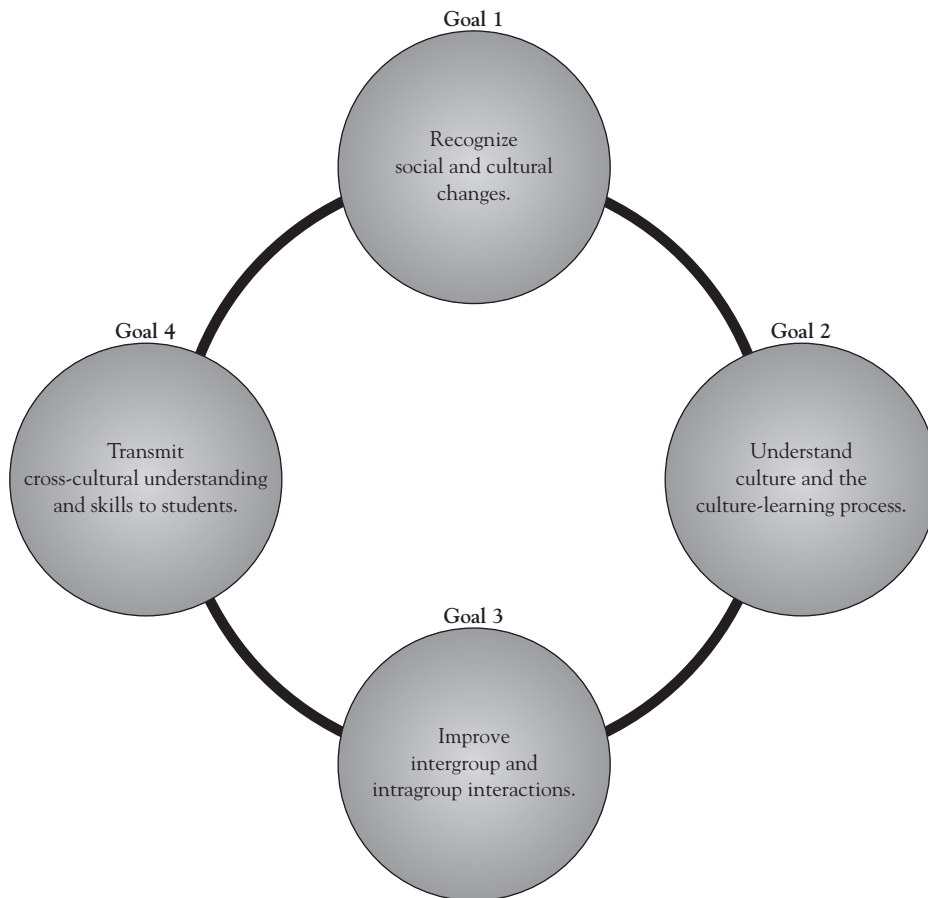

Goal 1
Recognize social and cultural changes.

Goal 2
Understand culture and the culture-learning process.

Goal 3
Improve intergroup and intragroup interactions.

Goal 4
Transmit cross-cultural understanding and skills to students.

figure 1.2   Goals of this book.

Goal 1: To Recognize Social and Cultural Change

The first step in providing an education that is truly multicultural is to improve student understanding of the concept of pluralism in American society. Pluralism in this context must consider such sources of cultural identity as nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, geographic region, health, and ability/disability, and must look particularly at how each of these identities has had an impact on the individual as well as the group. This step requires that teachers understand the social changes that have historically and are currently taking place in our pluralistic society; these social changes provide the underlying rationale for multicultural education and are found in Chapters 1 and 2 as well as throughout the book.

Goal 2: To Understand Culture, Learning, and the Culture-Learning Process

After establishing the need for an education that is multicultural, it is necessary to understand just what is meant by that term. What does the term *culture* refer to, and how do people come to acquire different cultural identities? With what knowledge do children already come to school? Too often schools do not legitimize the experiences children bring with them to the school; instead schools label some children as failures because their backgrounds, including their language and culture, are not seen as adequate or legitimate. Teachers must thus expand their knowledge base of culture and the different groups found in the United States as well as abroad. This means that curriculum content must be expanded and pedagogy adapted to include the experiences of all students. Chapter 3 examines these issues and in the process provides models of the sources of cultural learning and of the culture-learning process. An important recognition here is that differences *within* groups are often as important as differences *between* groups. Individuals belong simultaneously to many different groups, and their behavior can be understood only in terms of their *simultaneous* affiliation with these many groups. These models illustrate how culture filters down to the individual learner who actively engages with it, accepting and absorbing certain elements and rejecting and modifying others.

Goal 3: To Improve Intergroup and Intragroup Interactions

Goal 2 is to examine how individuals come to acquire their particular cultural identity; goal 3 is to show how culturally different people interact with one another and how these interactions can be improved. We must work to improve intergroup as well as intragroup interactions. We must also learn how individuals develop sensitivity and improve their interactions with other cultures. Goal 3 demands attention to such issues as development of intercultural sensitivity, cross-cultural understanding and interaction, attribution and assessment across groups, and conflict management. Teachers in particular must broaden their instructional repertoire so that it reflects an understanding of the various groups to be taught. To help teachers understand the interaction between culturally different individuals (whether from different groups or from the same group), Chapter 4 presents a model of intercultural interaction that applies culture learning to ourselves as well as our students and that develops a culture-general model of behavior.

These models help us analyze the nature of intercultural interaction and they show how key concepts can be applied to various types of school situations. Chapter 5 offers some useful models of intercultural development and synthesizes them with a new and somewhat more sophisticated model of intercultural development that helps increase the number of concepts as well as the language with which we can profitably understand and discuss these issues.

Goal 4: To Transmit Intercultural Understanding and Skills to Students

The book's final goal is to help teachers transmit to students the same understandings and skills that are contained in (1) the model for explaining cultural differences, and (2) the model for improving intercultural interaction in order to prepare multicultural citizen-actors who are able and willing to participate in an interdependent world. That is, this book strives to empower action-oriented, reflective decision makers who are able and willing to be socially and politically active in the school, community, nation, and world. This book is concerned not only with developing the knowledge and skill of practicing teachers, but also with transferring this knowledge to the pupils in their charge. Thus, individuals become proactive teachers and reflective practitioners who can ultimately prepare reflective citizen-actors (their students) for an interdependent world. The content of these models is universal. It applies to all multicultural situations, not just those confronted by teachers in classrooms and schools. Teaching these understandings and skills to students can be accomplished both through teacher modeling and through explicit instruction, and both methods are illustrated in the remaining chapters of the book.

The Role of Stories, Cases, and Activities

Stories

This book contains many stories, because stories help us visualize and talk about new ideas and experiences. Some stories are about real people and events, while others, like the story of the wheat people, are folktales and parables. Stories contain the power to speak about complex human experiences; in this book, stories speak about how people experience the fact of human diversity. Stories help us to see the universals within the experience. Everyone, no matter what his or her cultural or biological differences, goes through similar stages of experience when confronted with change. Stories, like no other literary device, help us cut through the morass of individual and cultural differences that separate us and allow us to focus on the universals of the experience as we come to grips with those changes.

Case Studies and Critical Incidents

Because it is difficult to imagine situations with which you have had little experience, this book develops a series of case studies and critical incidents describing multicultural teaching situations that you might encounter. These scenarios are actual or synthesized real-life

situations that have been described by a number of researchers and practitioners. Think of them as scenes in a play about schools with a multicultural student population. Most cases are generated from multiple sources, each of which is noted in the list of references.

Because the cases cover a variety of communities and classrooms with diverse kinds of people in them, multiple issues are embedded in most of the cases. Although each case is designed to illustrate one or more particular issues related to the topic at hand, the portraits of people, places, ideas, and activities are rich enough that they can also be used to discuss topics in other chapters. Taken together, these cases illustrate a number of complex classroom realities that defy simple right-and-wrong solutions. Rather, they present small dramas in which a number of interpretations are possible and in which a number of ideas can be used to develop plans of action and fallback positions. Most chapters begin with a case study that introduces many of the concepts that will be further developed. Critical incidents can be found at the end of many of the chapters that ask you to give further consideration to the topics presented.

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of some of the factors that are undergoing change in American society and that influence the lives of children and teachers in schools. Such rapid social change resulted in schools being caught in the transition from the Second Wave, an earlier factory model that offered a standardized curriculum for all, to the Third Wave, a more globally oriented dynamic model that attempts to address social change and prepare a citizenry that is more inclusive, integrative, and proactive. This book is designed to assist pre-service and in-service teachers to (1) recognize social and cultural change; (2) understand culture and the culture-learning process in self and others; (3) improve intergroup and intragroup interactions; and (4) transmit cross-cultural understandings and skills to students. The chapter also recognizes that change is difficult, yet is a force that we all must understand and accommodate—both as individuals as well as institutions.

Chapter Review

Go to the Online Learning Center at **www.mhhe.com/cushner5e** to review important content from the chapter, practice with key terms, take a chapter quiz, and find the Web links listed in this chapter.

Key Terms

Demographics   5

Multicultural education   20

Norms   6

Social institution   6

White privilege   8

Reflective Questions

1. Identify three changes that American society is undergoing, and discuss how those changes are reflected in schools.
2. Think back to your experiences in elementary and/or high school. What indication do you have that your school was reflective of a Second Wave, or an industrial-age, school? What indication do you have that your school was reflective of a Third Wave, or information-age, school?
3. In the case study, Drew questions why he needs to be in a diversity course. What experiences have you had that might lead you to say that you are well prepared for diversity? In what areas do you not feel as well prepared?

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