

## Definitions of Culture

“A culture is a complex web of information that a person learns, and which guides each person’s actions, experiences, and perceptions” (Campbell, 2000, p. 38).

James Banks defines culture as “the behavior, patterns, symbols, institutions, values, and other human made components of the society” (Banks, 1984, p. 52).

James Banks defines it as the unique values, symbols, life-styles, institutions, and other human-made components that distinguish one group from another. In the United States, we can describe the American national culture (the macroculture) as well as the diverse subcultural groups that are integral parts of the American national culture (the microcultures) (p. 124).

McCreary, Lewis, & Walker defines “culture as the thoughts, beliefs, practices and behaviors of a people in the areas of history, religion, social organization, economic organization, political organization, and collective production” (p. 150 in *Promoting Optimum Mental Health Through Counseling*, Hinkle 1999).

“Worldview is defined as the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions that individuals and groups hold about the world” (McCreary, Lewis, & Walker, p. 150).

Helms (1993) defines worldviews as “cognitive templates that people use to organize ... information about themselves, other people, and institutions” (p 9).

“A person’s worldview is informed by culture; thus, ... individuals who belong to the same cultural group are likely to hold similar worldviews”

(Marshall, 2002, p. 13).

Patricia Marshall defines culture as “consistent ways in which people experience, interpret, and respond to the world around; it represents the “ways of being” of a collective population. “... Prosaic element of culture are food, language, and music.”

Campbell states that “all cultures are dynamic.”

### *What is multicultural Education?*

“Multicultural education is a vision of schooling based on the democratic ideals of justice and equality” (Marshall, 2002, p. 21).

“A major goal of multicultural education, ... is to reform the school and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social groups will experience educational equality” (Banks 1993, p.3).

“The term itself is one educators use increasingly to describe education policies and practices that recognize, accept, and affirm human differences and similarities related to gender, race, disability, class, and (increasingly) sexual orientation” (Sleeter and Grant, p. 150).

“Multicultural education came into use among teacher educators in the United States in the 1970s” (Marshall, 2002, p. 21).

Its roots date back to the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement began in the late 1950s. The multicultural education approach began in the late 1960s and grew energetically in the 1970s (Sleeter & Grant, 1999, p151.).

As a field of study, it has undergone a four-stage revolution: “the first grew out of the ethnic studies movement. African-American scholars spearheaded these efforts ... and much of the work was related to this group. These scholars published journal articles,

books, curricular materials. These studies were used by African-American teachers who taught African-American students in segregated schools.

“multiethnic education was the second phase of multicultural education... Its aim was to bring about structural and systemic changes in the total school that were designed to increase educational equality. The third phase ... emerged when other groups such as women and people with disabilities demanded the incorporation of their histories, cultures, and voices into the curricula and structure of schools, ... The current, or fourth phase ... consists of the development of theory, research, and practices that interrelate variables connected to race, class, and gender” (Banks, 1995, p.20).