

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This is a study of multicultural education in the United States and determines its applications to multicultural dance education in Indonesia. To do this, I examine the literature of multicultural and dance education in the U.S. Furthermore, I look more closely at the cases of two dance teachers who are implementing multicultural education in their teaching in public schools in Columbus, Ohio. The purpose of this study is to discover the theories, definitions, goals, curricula, pedagogy, and practices of multicultural education that can be used to promote multicultural dance education in Indonesia. I am interested in exploring multicultural education in the U.S. because it promotes democracy and social justice. Indonesia has been in transition to reform its educational system to support a democratic nation, in which multicultural education will be necessary.

To provide an in-depth explanation of the study, this chapter is divided into eight sections: background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, definition of terms, methodology, significance of the study, limitations, and overview of the dissertation.

## Background to the Study

Multicultural education attempts to build the concepts of educational and social reform movement that address diversity in a pluralistic society for obtaining democracy, equality, and social justice (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; Banks, 1999; Banks & McGee Banks, 2004; Bennett, 1999; Gay, 2004, Gollnick & Chinn, 2006; Sleeter, 1996; Sleeter & Grant, 2003). Historically, multicultural education in the United States grew out of social and political struggles of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s (Banks, 2004; Bennett, 1999; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006). In American educational institutions, teachers in every subject area, including dance, are encouraged to implement multicultural education.

Educators in the United States have had to adjust to the increasingly diverse population of students in their classrooms (Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium [INTASC], 1992; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2002; Teacher Education Accreditation Council [TEAC], 2004; PRAXIS III, 2001; National Dance Education Organization [NDEO], 2005).

Multicultural education is an educational reform movement that addresses diversity of learners in a pluralistic society (Banks, 2004). It relies on approaches to teaching and learning based upon democratic values and beliefs to educate all students equally regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, gender, religion, exceptionality, sexual orientation, and age. Proponents of multicultural education want to serve the needs of all groups equitably and to help students understand people from other groups and how they themselves are shaped by their own groups.

Multicultural education challenges educators to develop their competencies of multiculturalism. Dhillon (2005) explains that “multiculturalism signifies the diversity of forms of life” (p. 89). It recognizes the value of different ways of life in social and cultural networks. It is related to multiple ways and attitudes of perceiving, evaluating, believing, and behaving.

The purpose of this research is to understand multicultural education in the U.S. and its applications for multicultural dance education in Indonesia. I did this in two ways: literature review and case studies. Through a review of the major works on multicultural education in the American context, I investigated the various theories of multicultural education. Through case studies of two dance teachers in Columbus public schools, I examined the implementation of multicultural education in teaching dance in the American context. I then formulated recommendations for multicultural dance education in Indonesia, particularly dance teacher education programs.

The K-12 dance curriculum of the Columbus public schools for 1998 explicitly emphasizes multicultural issues, including an understanding of culture, aesthetic principles, multiple approaches to teaching, and interdependent worlds. The curriculum encourages students to have knowledge about dance in the context of different cultures. Because every dance form has its own aesthetic principles, students are encouraged to have knowledge and skills that refer to the aesthetic principles of the culture in which a particular dance was created. This knowledge allows students to view, appreciate, and judge dance forms according to a culture’s aesthetic principles. Furthermore, the curriculum encourages educators to explore a variety of teaching methods and strategies that help diverse students to build self-confidence and self-knowledge to function with

integrity in a pluralistic society. The multicultural statement of the Columbus public schools also explains that

as world cultures become more interdependent socially, culturally, and economically, it becomes even more important for students to understand, appreciate, and value diversity. Because dance is a way to know culture, it becomes essential that dance play a more important role in the education of every child. (Columbus Public Schools Dance Course of Study, 1998, p. v)

Some argue that teachers who implement concepts of multicultural education teach stereotypes of other people and view other cultures based on their own culture. For example, according to Karen King-Cavin (personal communication, September 28, 2006) one art teacher viewed art works from others based on his own perception and familiarity, so that he judged unfamiliar art with inappropriate criteria. Therefore, it is important to better understand the theory and practice of multicultural education.

I am interested in conducting case studies of two dance teachers in the Columbus public schools to learn how multicultural education has been implemented in teaching dance. This study is important because its findings can provide insights and recommendations for dance teachers in Indonesia as well as in the United States.

In recent years, people in Indonesia have become increasingly aware of multiculturalism. Similar to the American population, the population in Indonesia is diverse, as reflected in the national credo *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). There are more than 350 ethnic groups in Indonesia across populated islands with different local languages, religions, traditions, and cultural productions. However, at least until 1998, the Indonesian government instituted the political power of uniformity and homogeneity, while avoiding diversity as it contradicts with so-called 'national interests.'

In the United States the mainstream culture consists of Western Europeans who immigrated to North America (Bennett, 1999), whereas the mainstream culture in Indonesia consists of feudally structured people, mainly from Central and West Java as well as Bali at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, a small elite group was Dutch-educated Indonesian intellectuals. After Indonesia declared its independence from the Dutch in 1945, these two groups had the opportunity to create an Indonesian republic. Naturally, part of their concept of building a nation was based on their own ideology and tradition. This inevitably created conflict with the other ethnic groups and in some cases led to separatism. After the second president, General Suharto, a Javanese who served for thirty-two years had to step down in 1998, the new Indonesian government tried to decentralize and develop a more democratic system. However, conflicts between ethnic and religious groups and the gap between the elite and the poor have persisted. In this connection it may be worth noting that often the so-called ethnic and religious conflicts are in fact grounded in social conflicts caused by the veiled Javanisation by the former regime.

Given Indonesia's unique population, it is imperative that multicultural education be implemented in Indonesian schools to promote an understanding of both local cultural identity and of the value of pluralism, equality, democracy, and social justice. When this is done in dance education classes, students can acquire knowledge of not only dance but of the variety of cultures from which various dances emerged. As Vissicaro (2004) stated, "dance creates a bridge for traversing cultural borders because fundamentally it involves the human body, something that all people have in common" (p. 5). Dance is culturally constructed through bodily movements. It is "a human cultural phenomenon" (Vissicaro,

2004, p. 3). It can represent an individual and a cultural identity. I strongly recommend that dance teacher education programs in Indonesian incorporate multicultural perspectives.

### Statement of the Problem

In my research I want to discover what aspects of multicultural education in the U.S. fit in the Indonesian context. Indonesia is different from America historically, socially, and politically. However, both countries are concerned with democratic ideals. Since the 1960s, American scholars have debated over issues of multiculturalism because democracy which was already in place in the United States was nonetheless biased by unjust practices. Likewise, although Indonesia claims to have a democratic government since 1945, it leaned more toward an authoritarian regime.

Today, the national education system in Indonesia calls for democratic, equitable, and non-discriminatory attitudes with high respect for human rights, religious and cultural values, as well as diversity in a pluralistic society (Ministry of National Education, Republic of Indonesia, 2005). In order to achieve these ideals and support a truly democratic nation, Indonesia's educational system needs to incorporate multiculturalism. As Bjork (2005) stated, following decentralization, "teachers who had previously functioned as loyal agents of policy directives were suddenly asked to act as agents of change" (p. 3). As Freire (2003) argued, education is always a political act. It can be used to maintain the status quo or it can be used to bring social change. One would hope that, as Indonesia moves forward to a democratic system of government, education will be used as a vehicle for social change.

Indonesia is rich with cultural productions of all its diverse ethnic groups. For example, the Indonesian national curriculum for arts education encourages the study of the arts from diverse local cultures, at least since 1994. It states that students should know and be able to appreciate fine arts, music, theatre, and dance from respective local and other areas (Ministry of National Education, 1994, 2003). Therefore, the national curriculum content for the arts involves local and other cultures. This implies that the purpose of arts education in schools is to increase the awareness of diversity and the value of pluralism. Despite the government policy demands to implement this curriculum, multiculturalism has still not really become an essential part of Indonesian school programs and of teaching practices. Furthermore, especially the curriculum content of music and fine arts is still too Western-oriented (see chapter 5).

As for dance teacher education programs in Indonesia, although they always include students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, they do not pay much attention to issues of diversity, including race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and socioeconomic status. For instance, dance in Indonesia is still part of the community life that functions in ritual, social, cultural, and aesthetic representations. But the curricula of the dance programs mostly focus on dance as an art form from the local culture, while just a small part of the curricula includes dances from other cultures. This is why multicultural education becomes necessary. Offering a variety of dance in Indonesia as well as dance from other cultures can enable teachers and students to engage in multicultural education goals that may contribute to Indonesia's competitiveness in the world.



## Research Questions

My research question is as follows:

What aspects of American experience with multicultural education are helpful in promoting multicultural dance education in Indonesia?

To further explore this question and to trigger a more in-depth investigation, the question will be divided into two parts:

1. What theories of multicultural education are most relevant to the present situation of education in Indonesia, specifically to dance education?
2. What aspects of the two dance teachers' practice in Columbus will be most useful to multicultural dance education in Indonesia?

My sub questions for the cases are the following:

- a. What is each dance teacher's teaching philosophy?
- b. How do the teachers view diverse students?
- c. How do the teachers develop curricula and pedagogy that address diverse students?
- d. How do the teachers communicate and interact with diverse students in and outside of their dance classes?
- e. How do the school environments, other teachers, and principals provide support for teaching dance?
- f. What are the differences in context between these two Columbus public schools and Indonesian schools?
- g. How can the research findings from the case studies be transferred to Indonesian schools?



## Definition of Terms

There are several terms to be defined related to multicultural education, including culture, cultural identity, cultural diversity, cultural pluralism, and multiculturalism.

### *Culture:*

In this study, I employ two points of view: (1) culture as a product that contains a symbolic system in tradition and (2) culture as a process in everyday life that shapes and reshapes an individual's cultural identity.

### *Culture as a Product:*

Scholars of multicultural education use the concept of culture as a basic understanding of oneself and others. This goes beyond the assumption that culture is socially constructed, in that it influences and is influenced by individuals, social groups, the environment, and the political, economic, social, and cultural situations throughout time. Scholars of multicultural education explore and utilize the concepts of culture differently based on the referent group's orientation and the goals regarding multicultural education.

Those who focus on ethnicity support multicultural education goals that emphasize developing human/race relations. They define culture as “shared knowledge and belief systems, or symbols and meanings” (Bennett, 1999, p. 38), “as the way of life of a social group, the total human-made environment” (Banks, 1999, p. 54). Both Bennett and Banks also refer to well-known anthropologist Geertz (1973) who defines culture as a system of symbols. Bennett believes that students' attitudes and behaviors can be influenced by symbols and meanings of family backgrounds. Therefore, knowing students' cultural backgrounds may help teachers better understand their students as well

as their own culture. To accomplish this, Erickson (2007) encourages teachers to first engage in critical autobiography, where the teachers identify their particular cultural background. Teachers are then encouraged to use this as a pedagogical approach and part of their curriculum. They engage students in autobiographical inquiry that consists of observation and dialogue concerning students' family background and communities.

Culture as a symbol system can be examined in traditions and belief systems, representing music, dance, theater, craft, games, and folktales. Every ethnic group in Indonesia still preserves those traditions as part of its cultural productions. For example, learning a dance form from one ethnic group can help to understand the culture of that ethnic group.

*Culture as a Process:*

As Sleeter and Grant (1987, 2003) extend the concept of multicultural education to the social reconstruction approach, they claim that culture involves directly lived experiences, including the nature of oppression and social change. Referring to critical pedagogy theory, Sleeter and Bernal (2004) identify “the culture of everyday life, viewing culture as created within historic, as well as contemporary power struggles” (p. 253). In this definition, the concept of culture is regarded as a process. Sleeter and Grant (1987, 2003) encourage teachers to include social, political, and economic issues in the curriculum content as part of students' lived experiences. Sleeter and Grant's (1987) ideas are very much adopted by Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr (2001), the proponents of multicultural art and visual culture education, who state that “we all have culture because we live and exist within social groups” (p. 7).

### *Cultural Identity:*

Cultural identity includes variables of diversity such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, exceptionality, language, religion, geography, and age. Banks (2007) states that “the group is the social system that carries a culture” (p. 13). Banks identifies a group’s culture as microculture, in opposition to macroculture, which is the overarching or national culture. Gollnick and Chinn (2006) identify characteristics of culture, which means that culture can be learned, shared, modified, and changed. An individual may belong to several groups at the same time, but probably the individual has strong characteristics in a certain group, while others are weak.

Banks (2007), and Gollnick and Chinn (2006) believe that interactions and interrelations within groups can shape individual cultural identity. For example, an individual’s race/ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, age, and nationality reflects one’s identification as an identity that can determine the individual’s thinking, acting, and believing. According to Ballengee-Morris and Stuhr (2001), aspects of personal cultural identity are shared with different social groups and are often influenced by the national culture within which the group exists. Understanding individual cultural identities will help teachers determine the learning style and behavior of students and how teachers can approach them.

### *Cultural Diversity:*

Cultural diversity maintains cultural identity that includes ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, exceptionality, language, religion, and age. It also encompasses cultural differences that exist between people such as language, dress, and traditions.

### *Cultural Pluralism:*

Cultural pluralism is a concept developed by philosopher Kallen (1924) in the early twentieth century. He argues that “each ethnic group had the democratic right to retain its own heritage” (cited in Bennett, 1999, p. 52). Bennett states that in an ideal form, cultural pluralism is a process of compromise characterized by mutual appreciation and respect between two or more cultural identities. The concept of cultural pluralism confronted the concept of cultural assimilation, affirming the American melting pot. Cultural assimilation is a process by which people from original ethnic and racial groups or individual cultural identities assimilate into the life of the core culture in the host society.

Even though cultural assimilation has been a strong theme throughout the history of the United States, “cultural pluralism is an ideal state of societal conditions characterized by equity and mutual respect among existing culture groups” (Bennett, 1999, p. 53). America’s *E Pluribus Unum* (Out of Many, One) is similar to Indonesia’s *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). This credo supports the concept of cultural pluralism which reflects Indonesia’s richness of cultural heritage and traditions.

### *Multiculturalism:*

Multiculturalism is about attitudes in ways of viewing, believing, and acting in the world. Attitudes imply moral judgment in refusing to value one set of thinking and practices but accepting the value of different forms of life (Dhillon, 2005). Furthermore, Dillon explains that multiculturalism suggests openness of thinking about valuing differences and being part of flexible and expanding social and cultural networks. In

other words, politically, multicultural education forces that educational institutions and people become multicultural in a pluralistic and democratic society.

### Methodology

Qualitative research methods were employed in this study, as they produce descriptive and interpretative explanations rather than numerical data. In this qualitative research, I employed the case study method offered by Stake (1995, 2000) and Yin (2003). I used Stake's collective case study and Yin's empirical inquiry. The purpose of both was to examine cases that support an understanding of a contemporary phenomenon or issue of multicultural education.

I investigated various theories of multicultural education in my literature review and examined the implementation of multicultural education in teaching dance in the American context by using case studies of two dance teachers in public schools in Columbus, Ohio. Data were obtained through structured and unstructured interviews, participant observation, reflective journal, and teachers' and schools' documents.

### *Data Collection*

I conducted a case study of two dance teachers to discover how aspects of multicultural education are embedded in their teaching. The dance teachers I studied were Ms. Marlene Robbins at Indianola Informal Alternative Elementary School K-5 and Ms. Karen King-Cavin at the Arts IMPACT (Interdisciplinary Model Program in the Arts for Children and Teachers) Middle School (AIMS). I chose these teachers because the two schools where they are employed have stronger dance programs than other Columbus

public schools. My investigation of the cases focused on teaching philosophy, curriculum content, approaches to pedagogy, classroom management, and collaboration with regards to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and socioeconomic class.

Interviews and observations were conducted for one semester from January 2007 to the beginning of June 2007. I spent two days a week in each school, to see how the teacher uses curriculum content, develops instruction, manages the classroom, and communicates with diverse students. I also observed the school environment to see how it might influence the teachers in teaching dance. Moreover, I observed how the teachers interact with other teachers, principals, and parents during the time they worked in the schools. In addition, I interviewed other teachers and principals to gather their perceptions of the two teachers and their support for dance classes.

To ensure validity and trustworthiness, I did member checks. After interviewing the two main participants and the secondary participants, I transcribed the answers and comments. Then, I asked the participants to review the transcripts to make sure I had understood their comments correctly and to have them provide additional input and corrections.

Throughout the research process, I maintained journals of important issues from my readings and my experiences. I also studied teachers' documents related to teaching philosophy, lesson plans, teaching materials, and the students' works, as well as school documents containing state and local standards, demographic data of students, and other related documents.

I focused on elementary and middle schools because in both U.S. and Indonesia arts classes are required. This study revealed that the Columbus public schools are similar

to Indonesian urban schools in terms of their diversity. The differences between Columbus public schools and Indonesian urban schools are in the details: the history, the way people migrated, race, ethnicity, religion, and language. Students' ethnic backgrounds in Columbus public schools include Euro-Americans, Hispanics, American-Indians, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Asians, and students from the Middle East. Students come from middle class and poor families. They are Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, and non-religious. The language of instruction is English.

In Indonesia, people from diverse ethnic backgrounds come from different islands, including Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Irian Jaya, to the capital cities, like Jakarta, Bandung, Medan, Padang, Yogyakarta, and Surabaya, to pursue further education and to get a job. These cities, located on the main Island of Java and Sumatra, are centers of industrialization, bureaucracy, and higher education. Indonesians' religious backgrounds are diverse, consisting of Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucians, and people who hold mystical and animistic beliefs. The majority of Indonesians are Muslim, although there is still a significant diversity in religious practices due to different cultural backgrounds (see chapter 5). The language of instruction in Indonesian schools is Bahasa (language) Indonesia. Nevertheless, most students in rural areas enter school speaking mainly their ethnic languages.

### *Data Analysis and Interpretation*

In analyzing the data, I focus on answering the following research questions:

- Do the theories, definitions, goals, curricula, and pedagogy of multicultural education from the educational literature in the U.S. provide useful curricular



framework for promoting multicultural dance education in the Indonesian context?

- In what ways does multicultural education in teaching dance in the Columbus Public Schools shape teachers' pedagogical philosophy, curriculum content, strategies for classroom management, and commitment to collaboration in schools? And how might this be useful to multicultural dance education in Indonesia?

I triangulated my analysis and interpretation of my findings from the literature review concerning the theoretical aspects of multicultural education in the U.S., dance education, and case studies. To build trustworthiness into this qualitative study, I did member checks, and my advisory committee helped to make meaning from the data.

### Significance of the Study

Since the 1960s, U.S. scholars for various disciplines, including dance have debated issues of multicultural education. They promoted multicultural education that strengthened democratic values and beliefs and affirmed cultural pluralism within diverse societies and an interconnected world. They also challenged and supported educational institutions and educators in serving the needs of all students equally, regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, gender or sexual orientation, exceptionality, language, religion, and age. This study will be valuable for Indonesia as the country moves toward becoming a truly democratic nation.

Research on the transfer of multicultural education in the U.S. to another country is rare. The State University of Jakarta in Indonesia held an international conference with

the theme,” Multicultural Education: Revitalizing Nationalism and the Role of Higher Education amid the Age of Globalization,” September 6-8, 2004, to explore issues of multicultural education. Most of the Indonesian presenters cited only theories and approaches to teaching multicultural education formulated by American scholars. However, no article discussed the historical and social aspects of multicultural education in the U.S. in connection with the Indonesian context.

This study will be the first to provide comprehensive perspectives from both contexts, the U.S. and Indonesia. Findings of this research can contribute significantly to the development and practice of multicultural dance education in Indonesia and dance teacher education programs in particular.

#### Limitations of the Study

I have studied the literature on multicultural education in the United States since early 2006, and I intensively studied the two cases of dance teachers in the Columbus public schools in 2007. However, this limited time period restricted my data collection. Furthermore, the study relied on only two case studies that focused on dance in elementary and middle school settings. This qualitative study is not generalizable.

#### Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation contains six chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction and background context of the study, a statement of the problem, my research questions, definition of terms and methodology, a significance of the study, limitations, and organization of this dissertation. Chapter two reviews the literature on multicultural

education and dance education in the U.S. Chapter three outlines the detailed methodology that I used in my dissertation research, including the research design, research questions, methods, the research context, data collection, data analysis, and interpretative framework. Chapter four presents the data and my analysis centered on the work of two cases of two dance teachers in the Columbus public schools. Chapter five explores the context of education in Indonesia including ethnicity, Indonesia's history, my personal educational experiences in Indonesia, national mandate for change, and current practice and potentials for multiculturalism in Indonesia. Chapter six provides a summary of the findings, implications for multicultural dance education in Indonesia, recommendations for dance teacher education programs, and future research in Indonesia.

