

To: Frank E. Bolden

When I applied for the Frank E. Bolden Special Education Scholarship I had no idea who he was or what to expect when I met him. All I knew was that this man had a passion for working with children with special needs and that was good enough for me because I had the same passion.

His first words, “Miss Richardson I was expecting a much larger young lady” which of course took me back and then he continued, “ With all that you do I expected you to be larger because one tiny young lady like yourself couldn’t possibly do all of these wonderful things I’ve read.” I had never received a compliment like that before; it was quite flattering but the flattery wasn’t over there.

After everyone did their introductions at the beginning of the scholarship ceremony Mr. Bolden was given the chance to speak or should a say he took the floor and told about who he was, what he did and where he came from. I was taken back to know that I was in the presence of such a great man. I believe I learned more History in those two hours with Mr. Bolden than any History class I had ever attended.

I had a new mission, when I got back to Duquesne University I was determined to have Mr. Bolden as a guest speaker, I felt every body should know who is, what he has done and what he has seen. Finally, almost a year later Mr. Bolden was able to come and the share his stories at Duquesne University. The crowd was taken back just as I was when Mr. Bolden began to speak. I learned even more that evening.

He was just not a storyteller, mentor or motivator, he was a teacher. Can you imagine what our children could have learned? I can, and that’s why when I think of all he’s done, I think big, or should I say large. Thank you for allowing me to think large. I never thought I would be interested in History and much less developing a unit for secondary American History but you have inspired me.

Thank you Mr. Bolden, you will be greatly missed. Behind every great man there is a great woman, thank you Mrs. Bolden for your continued support and encouraging words and a special thanks to the Poise Foundation, who awards the Frank E. Bolden Special Education Scholarship.

Introduction

After meeting Mr. Frank E Bolden and learning about a part of history I had never even heard of, I was determined to impart that information to children of the future in some shape or form and to help equip other teachers with additional resources besides the text book to teach History.

The purpose of this History unit is to remember Frank E. Bolden's contribution to History, particularly black history by highlighting some of the great topics he covered as a journalist for the Pittsburgh Courier and war correspondent for the U.S. Government. This secondary History unit will be given as a gift to Frank E. Bolden Special Education Scholarship recipients to use in the future as a resource. It will also be used as a supplement to the video "Frank E. Bolden, The Man Behind The Words" produced by Daniel Love. Though the unit will not cover every topic in the video, it will focus on Frank E. Bolden's significant topics and role as a war correspondent for the people and telling the stories of black soldiers through the black press. Through this unit, students will discover the purpose of the black press and its role in the Double V campaign to end Jim Crow Laws in the military and on the home front during World War II. This unit can also be used as an introduction to the African American military involvement during World War II and can be easily infused into any American History or African American History curriculum.

This unit will be able to be used as a supplement to school textbooks when covering correlating issues during World War II. The unit includes; literary resources for students and teachers, World Wide Web resources, video cassette resources, lesson plans and suggested activities.

As a student, I remember my disinterest in History. And it is not surprising today that students are still disinterested in History. I understood that understanding my past was central to my ability to understand myself and the world around me but still I simply was bored out of my mind. It was not until I reached college and had the opportunity to meet Frank E. Bolden that I realized that history did not have to boring.

What Frank E. Bolden did as a journalist for the Pittsburgh Courier was tell the people's story from first hand accounts, he told History and was a History maker. He

brought emotions to his work, relying on his own personal experience and experiences of people in his community and abroad. Emotions are a part History and allow student to make connections that touch their lives. That's what History should do, touch student lives to make them be more active in learning and critical thinking about History and their future; not bore them to death.

After listening and interacting with Mr. Bolden and learning about his experience I realized why I was so bored. History in schools, are dominated by textbooks. And as I've learned at a late stage in life but not to late, that text books don't tell the whole truth. As stated by James W. Loewen author of the book Lies My Teacher Told Me, Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong,

Textbooks supply irrelevant and even erroneous details, while omitting pivotal questions and facts in their treatments of issues. We have also seen that history textbooks offer student no practice in applying their understanding of past to present concerns, hence no basis for thinking rationally about anything in the future. Reality gets lost as authors stray further and further from the primary resources and even secondary literature. Text books rarely present the various sides of historical controversy and almost never reveal to students the evidence on which each side bases its position" (Loewen 272).

As an educator, I plan to, "act as an informed reference librarian, directing children to books, maps, and people who can answer their questions about history" (Loewen 315). I am far from being a historian or a history teacher but I speak from my experience of History and being a future educator of young minds.

In thinking of the traditional American history classes, we have the typical scenario. Students are reading chapter after chapter, defining vocabulary words and answering chapter summary questions, primarily using lower cognitive skills as described on Blooms Taxonomy such as knowledge and comprehension instead of higher order thinking skills. Students are usually presented with a timeline of unrelated events. Fact after fact is given with out creating making connections to the past or the present. This is a very sad scenario

After experiencing the traditional American History classroom myself and observing it in today's classroom, I have two main concerns. The first, is the dominant use of textbooks to teach History and the second, is how we as teacher, teach the past. After reading and doing my own research on these concerns, I have some remedies as a novice educator that I believe will address my concerns which are supported by numerous leaders in education.

One such leader, James A. Banks; a specialist in social studies education and multicultural education examines the conception of America that is perpetuated in the curriculum and the assumptions and purposes that underlie that curriculum. Most History curriculums are taught primarily from a mainstream perspective. What Banks suggest that we do as educators, is gear toward a multicultural perspective in teaching history by integrating ethnic content into the curriculum. Banks gives a diagram explaining these approaches to curriculum reform and integration (see Figure 1.1). Most integration of ethnic content takes place through the contributions and additive approaches described by Banks in high school classrooms. But it is the transformation approach and social action approach we as educator should be headed toward. At the transformation approach level students are enabled to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view. The infusion of content from different groups allows students to extend their understanding of nature, development, and complexity of the United States and the world (Bank 19). The social approach level as described by Banks incorporates all of the elements of the transformation approach and adds the components that require students to make decisions and take actions related to the concept, issue, or problem they have studied (Banks 20). Please note that these approaches to the integration of ethnic content are often mixed and blended in teaching situations but is first crucial that you know you r students and their cultural backgrounds in order to meet their needs. In the case of this unit, we are looking at the integration of the African American in the study of World War II and the role of the black soldier.

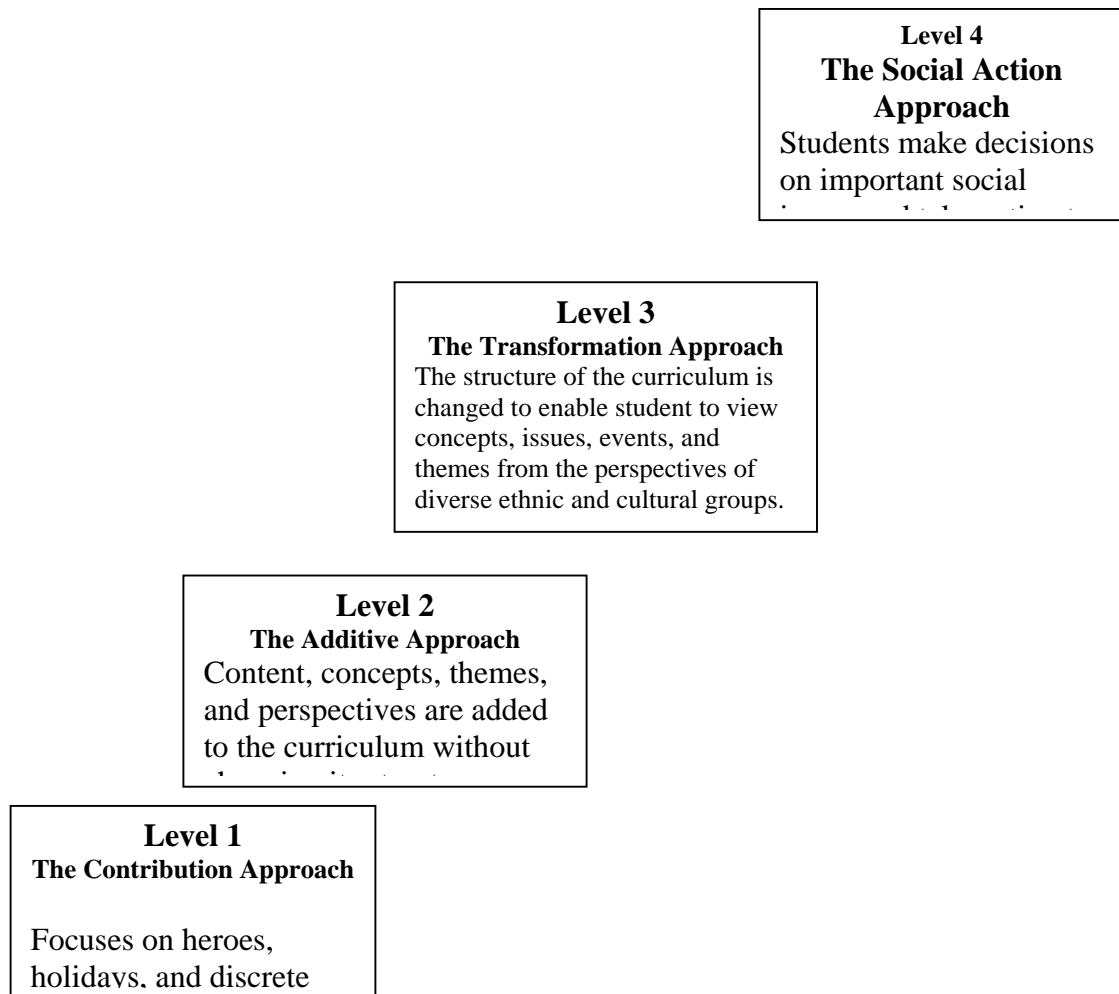


Figure 1.1 Banks J., (2003) *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies (7th ed)*. Boston: Pearson Education Group, Inc.

Another leader in education, James W. Loewen, a professor of sociology at the University of Vermont has researched for many years American History textbooks and has found that American History textbooks, have stories that are predictable; every problem has already been solved or is about to be solved. Textbooks exclude conflict or real suspense. They leave out anything that might reflect badly upon our nations character. Textbooks almost never use the present to illuminate the past. They portray the past as a simple mined morality play. While there is nothing wrong with optimism, it can become something of a burden for students of color, children of working class parents, women and members of any group that has not achieved socioeconomic success. This is why Loewen stresses the importance of using supplemental text and infusing it into the curriculum (Loewen 14). Loewen encourages the use of textbooks with the use of supplemental materials, this will allow teachers to confront students with important questions and problems for which answers are not readily available in textbooks. Students will develop research skills and higher order thinking skills that will enable them to utilize data from a variety of sources such as the history, the social sciences, literature, from students' first hand experience and journalism as the case with this unit. (Loewen 272).

Teachers will be able to integrate ethnic content into the classrooms once they understand what true multicultural education is and become transformational educators. We must look at History in the light of social change and how we educate. The transformational educator is reflective and responsive – cognizant not only of the implications their students' backgrounds hold for them as teachers but attuned as well to the world through research for which the children in their charge must be prepared. (Strouse 291) They not only strive to be responsive to their students work but as well for social justice beyond their classrooms and this is where we see the correlation to Banks integration of ethnic content at the transformation and social action approach levels.

As educators and agents for transformation, learn to infuse the curriculum with supplemental materials and other forms of literature besides textbooks while trying to develop a more multicultural educational experience in teaching all. Our job as teachers is to be highly selective in the resources we provide and also in our presentation of different perspectives from a multicultural point of view. We must be able organize our lessons around important problems in society, so we can study them in depth and utilize the information we learn. The implications of a unit like this is to encourage teachers to

look for additional resource, take time to research history from different ethnic perspectives and not rely solely on the textbook as the primary source of information. In conclusion, this unit does not take us completely to the transformation of the curriculum, but starts off at the additive approach of ethnic integration. These concepts presented for multicultural education gives us as educators something to think about in our teaching of the past and for the future.