



EMPOWERING TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME THROUGH MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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The present article aims to highlight a better understanding Meaning of Multicultural education, The key elements of Multicultural Teacher Education, The Multicultural Curriculum, Characteristics and Approaches to integration of Multicultural content. The aim of the present paper is to provide the reader with an overview of relevant theoretical perspectives on Multicultural education, The key elements of Multicultural Teacher Education and Multicultural Curriculum. The phenomenon of Multicultural Education and Multicultural Curriculum is investigated by reviewing the (early) literature and an attempt is made to extrapolate the concept Multicultural education and Multicultural Curriculum. Hence, the present article entails a theoretical discussion of issues in Multicultural education and Multicultural Curriculum.

Introduction

We have an academic responsibility and a moral obligation to provide students with an inclusive education that will enable them to deal with the contingencies of living in a diverse world. Research shows that when students are taught from an inclusive curriculum they are eager to learn; they are more engaged in the teaching/learning process. They want more inclusive course content throughout the education process. Faculty who are involved in integrating diversity into their curriculum report that their teaching is revitalized, their student evaluations improved, and their overall job satisfaction increased.

Teacher education programs play a crucial role in determining teachers' attitudes toward diversity and the accommodation of that diversity within their teaching. A high quality teacher education for diversity should equip its preservice teacher with the abilities of "understanding students' cultural backgrounds, interests, skills, and abilities as they apply across a range of learning domains and /or subject areas; understanding students' motivations and their interests in specific class content; clarifying and articulating the performance outcomes expected of pupils; and planning instruction for individuals or groups of students"

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education describes a system of instruction that attempts to foster cultural pluralism and acknowledges the differences between races and cultures. It addresses the educational needs of a society that contains more than one set of traditions, that is a mixture of many cultures



Multicultural education is a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity as acknowledged in various documents. It affirms our need to prepare student for their responsibilities in an interdependent world. It recognizes the role schools can play in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society. It values cultural differences and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. It challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice.

Multicultural education is a process that permeates all aspects of school practices, policies and organization as a means to ensure the highest levels of academic achievement for all students. It helps students develop a positive self-concept by providing knowledge about the histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups. It prepares all students to work actively toward structural equality in organizations and institutions by providing the knowledge, dispositions, and skills for the redistribution of power and income among diverse groups. Thus, school curriculum must directly address issues of racism, sexism, classism, linguicism, ablism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance.

Multicultural education advocates the belief that students and their life histories and experiences should be placed at the center of the teaching and learning process and that pedagogy should occur in a context that is familiar to students and that addresses multiple ways of thinking. In addition, teachers and students must critically analyze oppression and power relations in their communities, society and the world.

The Prerequisites and Some key elements for of Multicultural Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education programs must prepare all teachers, majority or minority, to provide quality education for all students. Olstad, Foster, and Wyman (1983) indicated that teachers' lacking multicultural education are inadequately prepared for the reality of a pluralistic society and tend to have low expectations for minority children. Teacher educators must ask themselves to what degree their teacher preparation programs (a) facilitate increased cultural self-awareness, (b) cultivate appreciation of diversity, (c) increase cultural competency, and (d) prepare teachers to work effectively with a variety of students and parents, to the extent that education programs achieve these ends, to that extent do they prepare culturally competent teachers?

1. The entire climate and culture of department, schools, or colleges of education and cooperating schools radiate a consistent, pervasive, and comprehensive appreciation for and promotion of cultural diversity. The commitment to multiculturalism is conveyed through lecture series, awards presentations, and criteria used to identify accomplishments of students, faculty, and staff deserving distinguished recognition Essays in Education. Institutions must also continue to support faculty development programs to assist faulty members in gaining the knowledge and expertise to teach from multicultural perspectives (Bulter & Schmitz, 1992).



2. Efforts to produce teacher education programs more reflective of diversity. Reflection should be encouraged in teacher preparation.
3. Teacher education program should be able to provide various cultural materials for prospective teachers. They are given opportunity to understand and appreciate other cultures, and information about the characteristics and learning styles of various groups and individuals and are taught about the limitations of this information. In addition, students are taught various procedures by which they can gain information about the communities represented in their classrooms.
4. Students are taught how to assess the relationships between the methods they use in the classroom and the preferred learning and interaction styles in their students' homes and communities. Students are taught how to use various instructional strategies and assessment procedures sensitive to cultural and linguistic variations and how to adapt classroom instruction and assessment to accommodate the cultural resources that their students bring to school.
5. School and community field experiences in a variety of cultural settings that can provide all prospective teachers with opportunities to develop greater intercultural teaching competence are important.

The Multicultural Curriculum

The Multicultural Curriculum focus is on the development and implementation of a range of multicultural curriculum topics/units, as well as the delivery of training and resources for educators, students, and the community. A multicultural curriculum has three major components: (1) Content, (2) Methods, and (3) People.

"Content" includes scholarship, theories, concepts, facts, contributions, and perspectives of people of differing race, ethnicity, gender, language, social class, religion, sexual orientation, abilities and disabilities, political beliefs, etc., that have been historically underrepresented in all educational arenas.

Methods" include pedagogical strategies that accommodate diverse teaching and learning styles, academic policies that support the recruitment, mentoring, and retention of a multicultural student, faculty, and staff population, and curricular processes that support the exploration, development, and implementation of multicultural curricula.

"People" includes a multicultural student, faculty, and staff population that supports and engages in the development and implementation of multicultural curricula through the methods described.

Characteristics of a Multicultural Curriculum

1. Delivery

Delivery must acknowledge and address a diversity of learning styles while challenging dynamics of power and privilege in the classroom. Vary instructional techniques e.g. Cooperative Learning, Dialogue Individual Work, Student Teaching

2. Content

Content must be complete and accurate, acknowledging the contributions and perspectives of all groups.

**3. Teaching and Learning Materials**

Teaching and learning materials must be diverse and critically examined for bias. Vary instructional materials. -Texts, Newspapers, Videos/Movies, Games Workbooks. Examine all materials for bias and oppressive content.

4. Perspective

Content must be presented from a variety of perspectives and angles in order to be accurate and complete.

5. Critical Inclusivity

Students must be engaged in the teaching and learning process and facilitate experiences in which students learn from each other's experiences and perspectives.

6. Social and Civic Responsibility

If we hope to prepare students to be active participants in an equitable democracy, we must educate them about social justice issues and model a sense of civic responsibility within the curriculum.

7. Assessment

Curriculum must be assessed constantly for completeness, accuracy, and bias. Work with a cohort of teachers to examine and critique each other's curricular units, lesson plans, and entire frameworks. Request and openly accept feedback from your students. Return to this model from time to time to make sure you haven't reverted to former practices.

The curriculum integration and transformation process consists of three Central components:

(1) increasing personal knowledge -- adding and deepening one's personal knowledge about multicultural issues, (2) restructuring course syllabi and content -- transforming the content and structure of courses to meet the learning needs, learning styles and life experiences of a diverse student population; and (3) Changing classroom dynamics - changing the classroom interactions so as to provide a safety and more inclusive environment for all students. Some faculty address these issues one at a time while others are engaged in all three simultaneously.

Levels and Approaches to integration of Multicultural content

There are four approaches to the integration of multicultural content into the curriculum.

Level 1: The Contributions Approach

Focuses on heroes holidays and discrete cultural elements.

Level 2: The Additive Approach

Content, concepts, themes and perspectives are added to the curriculum without Changing its structure

Level 3: The Transformation Approach

The structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups.

Level 4: The Social Action Approach



Students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them.

1. The Contributions Approach

The contributions approach to integration (Level 1) is frequently used when a school or district first attempts to integrate multicultural content into the mainstream curriculum. The contributions approach is characterized by the insertion of ethnic heroes/heroines and discrete cultural artifacts into the curriculum, selecting those of criteria similar to those used to select mainstream heroes/heroines and cultural artifacts. An important characteristic of the contributions approach is that the tradition Curriculum remains unchanged in its basic structure, goals and salient characteristics. Prerequisites for the implementation of this approach are minimal.

2. The Additive Approach

Another important approach to the integration of ethnic content into the curriculum is the addition of content, concepts, themes and perspectives to the curriculum without changing its basic structure' purposes, and characteristics. The additive approach is often accomplished by the addition of a book, a unit, or a course to the curriculum without changing it substantially.

The additive approach allows the teacher to put ethnic content into the curriculum without restructuring it, a process that would take substantial time, effort, and raining as well as a rethinking of the curriculum and its purposes, nature, and goals. The additive approach can be the first phase in a transformative curriculum reform effort to designed to restructure the total curriculum and to integrate it with ethnic content, perspectives, and frames of reference.

3. The Transformation Approach

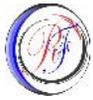
The transformation approach differs fundamentally from the contributions and additive approaches. In those two approaches, ethnic content is added to the traditional core curriculum without changing its basic assumptions, nature, and structure. The fundamental goals, structure, and perspectives of the curriculum are changed in the transformation approach. The transformation approach changes the basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes and problems, from several ethnic perspectives and points of view.

4. The Social Action Approach

The social action approach includes all the elements of the transformation approach but adds components that are require students to make decision and decisions and take actions relates to the concept, issue, or problems studied in the unit (Banks & Banks, with Clegg, 1999).

Major

goals of instruction in this approach are to educate students for social Criticism and social change and to teach them decision-making skills. To empower students and help them acquire political efficacy, the school must help them become reflective social critics and skilled participants in social change.



Summary

Multiculturalism is the celebration of racial and cultural diversity, seeing other cultures, (especially those traditionally excluded) on their own terms, in contrast especially to those of traditional and patriarchal society. Multicultural education has as its purpose the development of citizens of a more democratic society through provision of more accurate and comprehensive disciplinary knowledge and through enhancement of students' academic achievement and critical thinking applied to social problems. It seeks to promote the valuing diversity and equal opportunity for all people through understanding of the contributions and perspectives of people of differing race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and physical abilities and disabilities. Teacher education programs must prepare all teachers, majority or minority, to provide quality education for all students. A high quality teacher education for diversity should equip its preservice teacher with the abilities of "understanding students' cultural backgrounds, interests, skills, and abilities as they apply across a range of learning domains and /or subject areas; understanding students' motivations and their interests in specific class content; clarifying and articulating the performance outcomes expected of pupils; and planning instruction for individuals or groups of students.

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