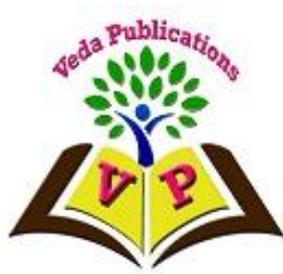




NOURISHING THE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF THE STUDENTS THROUGH MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims to create and promote more opportunities to the students and help to develop knowledge of English language and the surrounding world so that they may have the ability, desire and confidence to use English in a functional and meaningful context. As English language has become a global language, the students have to gain proficiency in the language to gain ample opportunities. It is also the responsibility of the teachers to teach effectively and skillfully in culturally diverse classrooms. There is a developing consensus that it is important to include culture learning as part of language learning with a primary goal of making students aware of alternative ways of interpreting personal and social experiences. By promoting multiculturalism, the students can overcome educational barriers and broadening opportunities for cultural classroom and to encourage and cooperate through peer learning. Multiculturalism also brings awareness among the students about the socio-cultural backgrounds of other countries and enables them to become independent learners.

Keywords: *Multiculturalism, Multicultural Education, Classroom Teaching*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the internet and wireless communication technology, the distance from country to country and people to people has become closer and the economies between regions and countries are connected more closely. The whole world became a global village. Multiculturalism is becoming more important in the 21st century compared to the past centuries. In order to gain employment the students are moving abroad where they have to be competent not only proficient in knowledge but also a perseverance to adapt and receiving the other countries' cultures and traditions.

WHAT IS MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Multicultural education is "sharing of many cultures." It is an approach to teach the values. Diversity in the classroom endorses diversity in content, methods, perspectives, educators, students, and cultures. Being a multicultural educator means embracing your students' and others' cultural diversity as a means of nurturing your students' academic and personal growth.

Banks and Banks (2001) define multicultural education as:

An idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school (p. 1).

They further explain that, "the term multicultural education describes a wide variety of programs and practices related to educational equity, women, ethnic groups, language minorities, low-income groups, and people with disabilities" (p. 6). Multicultural education may mean making changes within the curriculum in one school but a total change in leadership in another school. Gay (2000) and Ladson-Billings (2004) defined multicultural education as adopting a culturally responsive pedagogy with trained instructors facilitating it. Nieto (1996) defined multicultural education as "antiracist education" which is "a process important for all students" (p. 307). Jay and Jones (2005) defined

multicultural education as "the common term used to describe the type of pluralist education" where "its advocates are seeking for all children receiving an education, pre K through college" (p. 3).

REASONS TO INCORPORATE

MULTICULTURALISM IN THE CLASSROOMS

Geneva Gay, in her survey of research on and the parameters of multicultural education called "A Synthesis of Scholarship in Multicultural Education," helpfully delineates various purposes of multicultural education as follows:

1. Developing Ethnic and Cultural Literacy

In some cases, exploring and engaging diverse cultures are valued for the content of knowledge. As Gay explains, in this way, students learn about the historical backgrounds, languages, cultural characteristics, contributions, critical events, significant individuals, and social, political, and economic conditions of various majority and minority ethnic groups including those that may have traditionally been excluded from texts and lessons.

2. Personal Development

Another value of multicultural education is that—especially when those otherwise-under represented groups are brought into texts and lessons—students are offered more opportunity to see positive representations of aspects of themselves, leading students to "greater self-understanding, positive self-concepts, and pride in one's ethnic identity". Educators stress that these personal development benefits directly translate to academic achievement benefits as students are more inclined to be motivated to work hard and succeed.

3. Attitudes and Value Clarification.

Another intention of multicultural education is to better prepare students for living in a diverse community. For this purpose, the "intent is to teach youths to respect and embrace ethnic pluralism, to realize that cultural differences are not synonymous with deficiencies or



inferiorities, and to recognize that diversity is an integral part of the human condition and U.S. life.”

4. Multicultural Social Competence.

Closely related to the previous purpose, another sub-intention of multicultural education is to teach students concrete techniques for interacting with people who are different from themselves. This idea extrapolates to a whole range of important academic and analytical skills and is achieved by “teaching skills in cross cultural communication, interpersonal relations, perspective taking, contextual analysis, understanding alternative points of view and frames of reference and analyzing how cultural conditions affect values, attitudes, beliefs, preferences, expectations and behaviours. In addition to these classroom motivations for multicultural education, many educators and scholars point to extra-classroom purposes, including the broader quest for educational equity and excellence and personal empowerment for social reform. These social change motivations focus on the long-term impact of developing students who will, through their lives, help to improve society by eradicating such social ills as racism, sexism and classism. Such teachers see themselves as those engaged “in the ongoing struggle to advance social justice for the various groups who fail to get their adequate share of resources and decision making power in the larger society.”

GOALS OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

1. It results in a long term impact on the students to improve the standard of the society by eradicating the social evils such as racism, classism, etc.
2. Students learn that people can be different and unique, yet still have much in common. Such realizations help young children learn to accept differences and aid in eliminating prejudice and racism. These realizations assist children with accepting and respecting people from all cultures and backgrounds.

3. The students learn to accept differences and similarities among people. They can work and get along with others quite comfortably. They begin to see others’ viewpoints and respect individuality.
4. The multicultural classroom assists children from minority cultures in developing cooperation and social skills in a setting that may be unfamiliar to them. Their self-esteem can be boosted as they are recognized and accepted for their individuality. They feel good about themselves as other children recognize the worth of their traditions and customs.
5. Gay explains says that “ Multicultural education can improve mastery of reading, writing, and mathematical skills; subject matter content; and intellectual process skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution by providing content and techniques that are more meaningful to the lives and frames of reference of ethnically different students. Using ethnic materials, experiences, and examples as the contexts for teaching, practicing, and demonstrating mastery of academic and subject matter skills increases the appeal of the tools of instruction, heightens the practical relevance of the skills to be learned, and improves students' time on task. This combination of conditions leads to greater focused efforts, task persistence, skill mastery, and academic achievement (Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1985; Garcia, 1982; Boggs, Watson, Gregeo, &McMillen,1985).

Multicultural education requires teachers who are not only diverse but also culturally competent. Educators must be aware, responsive and embracing of the diverse beliefs, perspectives and experiences. They must also be willing and ready to address issues of controversy. These issues include, but are not limited to racism, sexism, religious intolerance, classism, ageism, etc.

The teacher must have knowledge of diverse cultures, their beliefs, values, foods, and customs. The teacher has to share them with the students when they



incorporate them into learning experiences and encourage students to ask questions that help them understand more about others' who have a different background from their own. The teacher can take the role of a learner learning the traditions of each student in the classroom, e.g., What holidays do they celebrate? How do they celebrate birthdays? How are they parented? What is their favorite food, family traditions, festivals, the favorite places to be visited in their country?

The teacher has to successfully implement a culturally diverse classroom environment with an attitude of acceptance and respect for other cultures. It requires an open mind that accepts and respects differences. Students follow what they see, so the teacher's inclusion and acceptance of different ideas, customs, and traditions help them learn to acceptance and respect other cultures, traditions and cultures.

Helping students to compare, contrast, and learn about other cultures without making judgements about them requires this attitude of acceptance and respect. As teachers lead students to respect others who are different, they will begin to appreciate individuality. As students grow and mature with these attitudes, they will have social skills that not only accept but also applaud individuality.

The teacher's success in implementing a culturally diverse classroom is the ability to add a multicultural perspective into curriculum planning and classroom management skills. This requires careful consideration of students' cultures and traditions and necessitates planning to help other students experience them in learning centers and activities.

The customs, traditions, etiquette of four countries, India, Oman, Germany and Japan are taken to provide information with a multicultural program. It helps in boosting the self-esteem and teaches them about acceptance and diversity. The customs and traditions of their cultures should definitely be represented in the learning environment.

INDIA

India is a secular and democratic country with various religions, languages and cultures. India, being a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, celebrates holidays and festivals of various religions. Indian cuisine is diverse, ranging from very spicy to very mild, varying with seasons in each religion. These

reflect the local agriculture, regional climate, culinary innovations and cultural diversity. Food in India is sometimes served in thali-a plate with rice, roti and a selection of side dishes. Traditional clothing in India greatly varies across different parts of the country. Popular styles of dress include draped garments such as sari for women and dhoti or lungi or panche in India. In India, the Hindu marriages are decided by the parents in consultation with astrologers. The Ramayana and the Mahagharatha are the oldest preserved and well known epics of India. Dance in India comprises the varied styles of dances in the country. The eight classical forms accorded to classical dance status by India's National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama are: Bharatanatyam, Kathak, kathakali, kuchipudi, Manipuri, Mohiniattam, odissi, Yakshagana, Sattriya. Cave paintings from Ajanta, Bagh, Ellora and Sittanavasal and temple paintings testify to a love of naturalism. Most early and medieval art in India is Hindu, Buddhist or Jain.

OMAN

Oman is an Arab country in the south-eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Oman is an absolute monarchy in which all legislative, executive, and judiciary power ultimately rests in the hands of the hereditary Sultan. Sultan Qaboos is the head of state and also directly controls the foreign affairs and defence portfolios.¹The sultan has absolute power and issues laws by decree. Omanis are Muslims. The official language of Oman is Arabic. Omani cuisine is diverse and has been influenced by many cultures. Omanis usually eat their main daily meal at midday, while the evening meal is lighter. The festivals are Ramadan and Eid. The Omani halwa is a very popular sweet, Halwa is considered as a symbol of Omani hospitality, and is traditionally served with coffee. Oman's traditional sports are dhow racing, horse racing, camel racing, bull fighting and falconry.

Association football, basketball, waterskiing and sandboarding are among the sports that have emerged quickly and gained popularity among the younger generation. The male national dress in Oman consists of the dishdasha, a simple, ankle-length, collarless gown with long sleeves. It may be in various colours also. The Omani women's traditional costume comprises several garments: the dishdasha



or kandoorah, which is a long tunic whose sleeves or radoon are adorned with hand-stitched embroidery of various designs. Quran is the holy book of Oman.

GERMANY

Germany is a Western European country. German is the official and predominant spoken language in Germany. Christianity is the largest religion in Germany. There are more holidays and festivals in Germany every year than any other European country. Eating habits in Germany vary by social class and milieu, but it is possible to generalize about the behavior of the inclusive middle class, which has emerged in the prosperous postwar era.

Most Germans acquire food from both supermarkets and specialty shops, such as bakeries and butcher shops. Bread is the main food at both breakfast and supper. Breakfast usually includes brötchen, or rolls of various kinds, while supper—called Abendbrot—often consists of bread, sausages or cold cuts, cheese, and, perhaps, a salad or vegetable garnish. The warm meal of the day is still often eaten at noon, though modern work routines seem to encourage assimilation to American patterns. Pork is the most commonly consumed meat.

The German culture is one of formality. There is a distinction between the formal 'you' and the informal 'you'. People who have been neighbours or work colleagues for many years may still refer to each other as the German equivalent of Mr and Mrs rather than the use first name terms.

It may be more difficult to make friends initially in Germany — the expat family will need to go and introduce themselves to their neighbours. This is because German culture is not a relationship-driven but a task-orientated culture. Germans do not generally participate in small-talk about the weather, but prefer to get on with the job in hand. Although it can be challenging to induce the German people to 'open up', once you succeed, you will meet their warm and generous side. Once a friendship is made, it is often for life.

Germans place a high priority on structure, privacy and punctuality. The German people embrace the values of thriftiness, hard work and industriousness.

JAPAN

Marriage is generally based on mutual attraction between individuals; this is known as a "love marriage" in contrast to the traditional "arranged marriage" in which a go-between negotiated a match in a process that might give parental opinions more weight than those of the prospective bride and groom. Some vestiges of arranged marriage continue and many couples rely on matchmakers to find mates. Background checks on a prospective spouse and his or her family are routine. Weddings are almost always held in hotels or wedding halls, with a lavish banquet for several dozen guests. The ceremonies blend elements from Shintō marriage rituals and stylized adaptations of Christian weddings.

Most families, especially in urban areas, are nuclear, consisting of the parents and their children. Slightly extended families, such as an elderly parent living with a married couple and their children, are not uncommon, but in general extended kin groups no longer play a major role in people's daily lives.

Shintō is the contemporary term for a system of gods and beliefs about the relationship between people, the natural environment, and the state. Shintō teaches that Japan is uniquely the land of the gods. The religion has no formal dogma or scripture. During much of Japanese history, Shintō and Buddhism have coexisted and influenced each other. Shintō is closely linked to the imperial family and a nationalist ideology. Buddhism was introduced into Japan from Korea and China during the sixth century A.D.

O-Shōgatsu, the New Year's holiday is the major holiday season of the year and is a time for ritual reaffirmations of social obligations. O-Bon in mid-August marks the season when the spirits of the deceased return to their homes, and many people go to their hometowns to clean graves and celebrate memories of the departed. Infants often are taken to Shintō shrines thirty days after their birth, and the holiday Shichigosan in November is an occasion for children to be honored at shrines. Shintō includes beliefs about unlucky ages, and many shrines offer purification rituals to ward off ill fortune for people passing through those dangerous years. Community celebrations generally echo Shintō observances of



the agricultural cycle. Local festivals vary, but most center on the celebration of the tutelary deity of a specific village, town, or neighborhood. Today local festivals are often expressions of community sentiment rather than religious events.

The traditional dress of Japan is Kimono. The most popular food in Japan is a bowl of cooked rice with most Japanese meals. For breakfast, it is sometimes mixed with a raw egg and soya sauce or enjoyed with natto or other toppings. Sushi may refer to any dish that contains sushi rice, cooked white rice flavoured with seasoned rice vinegar. In addition to rice, Japanese people eat bread, noodles, pasta and enjoy a wide array of meats, fishes, vegetables and fruits. Sushi, tempura, sukiyaki and other Japanese foods are famous abroad and also in Japan. The main annual festivals celebrated in Japan are Hatsumode or hatsumairi, Kakizome, Goyo Hajime.

CONCLUSION

The students' interaction with others about their countries with others in the classroom, inculcates awareness about the culture of other countries which he/she is not aware of. They embrace other countries and it helps in the development of students. So, a classroom must be a multilingual classroom and also incorporate multilingual curriculum. The teachers have to enhance and develop multiculturalism in students' lives for their empowerment.

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