

The definitions of multi-cultural education

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The purpose of this research paper is to discuss the increasing need for multi-cultural education incorporation into the classroom. And to investigate the teaching techniques of elementary school teachers and adaptations that can and should be made in order to increase the knowledge level of diversity among the students in the classroom.

There are many definitions of multi-cultural education. The one most used and most relevant, I believe to this topic and today's educational society is:

" An education free of inherited biases, with freedom to explore other perspectives and cultures, inspired by the goal of making children sensitive to the purity of the ways of life, different modes of analyzing experiences and ideas, and ways of looking at history found throughout the world."(Gay, 25 May 1994)

This definition is the most descriptive one found because it mentions the goal of sensitizing children to understanding diversity and the other children around them. Young children need to be exposed to the teachings about cultures other than their own. Many kids only know about their own cultures and it is imperative to their futures that they are educated about the other students around them. Children need to grow up in a world without having any prejudice towards others.

From the day a child is born, they are raised into the cultures of their parents. A child is taught their native language and about their cultural beliefs. Different cultures eat different foods, have their own way of dressing and speaking, and possess many other distinct cultural aspects. Children grow up questioning and understanding many aspects of their background

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and many times aren't subjected to other cultures. It is up to a child's parents to be the first teachers of multi-cultural education.

Many times parents are biased to their own culture and way of life. There is a lot of discrimination in the world and many parents teach their children to discriminate against others. Part of the job as a parent is to teach their children right from wrong and this includes learning about and accepting people for who they are, regardless of their color or race. "Studies by Glock and others have shown that the more children understand about stereotyping, the less negativism they will have toward other groups" (Ramsey, 1998, p. 62). This is common sense to most educators and parents.

The increase in diversity among the student population is one of the greatest challenges facing teachers in the 90s. Teachers have to not only teach their students about diversity and other cultures, but they also have to adapt their own views. Teachers can't be biased to their own or other cultures. Teachers must treat every student equally. And most importantly, teachers may have to adapt their teaching styles and methods to adhere to the diversity among their students in the classroom.

To adequately attend to cultural diversity in the classroom, teachers must look first at their own cultural background and understand how their biases affect their interactions with students. Then, teachers can examine the backgrounds and needs of the student population and understand their students' cultural biases as well. Many educators are biased to their own or other cultures and many are prejudiced toward some cultures. This is a serious issue that teachers need to recognize and change before they can

possibly begin teaching their students about diversity. If a teacher is biased, it will show in his or her teaching. Students may feel neglected or treated unequally.

It may be difficult to treat every student equally, but it is important in order to maintain balance in the classroom. Teachers must recognize each student in the classroom as being just as capable as every other student is. Teachers cannot always call on the same students; they must give each and every student the benefit of the doubt. They must be aware of the variation and diversity in their classroom in order to adapt their teaching methods.

Another important piece of knowledge that teachers should be aware of is recognizing the parents. Effective teachers engage parent involvement and demonstrate interest in and respect for the family's culture when interacting with parents. Teachers should find out as much as they can from parents about each child's experiences and family situations. This can help them to understand and meet the child's needs.

It is extremely important that teachers evaluate their teaching methods in order to incorporate multi-cultural learning into the classroom environment. Teachers need to be aware of the different ways that students learn and express themselves. Some students are better auditory learners, and some learn better with the use of visual aids. It is up to the teacher to notice these differences and adapt their teaching methods.

There are so many ways to incorporate diversity into everyday lesson plans. Using children's names from different cultures, in word problems for example, is a simple way. Literature is also an extremely easy way to teach <https://assignbuster.com/the-definitions-of-multi-cultural-education/>

students about diversity. Having the students read about different cultures in reading groups or even reading aloud to them helps greatly. There are also very many holidays throughout the school year that recognize different cultures. Connecting lessons with examples from the real world is a great way to incorporate diverse learning into class curriculum.

Another important aspect regarding multi-cultural incorporation is making sure that students get to know one another. Group work is very effective. Heterogeneous grouping and grouping students with different ethnicities together is an excellent way for students to feel more comfortable around each other. Students will learn more about a person and understand that they may be different but are still just like them.

" Research Findings that verify the conceptual claims about the effects of multicultural education are rather sparse. This relative lack of research is due largely to the nature and relative youth of the field. During the 25 or so years of multicultural education" s existence, most research andscholarshipave been devoted to defining the conceptual parameters of the field, documenting cultural characteristics, and developing sample curricula and instructional strategies for classroom practice."(Hanson, 1998, March).