

Teaching tolerance in schools essay

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Tolerance can be seen from different points of view depending on the circumstances being considered. In general terms, tolerance means “accepting the differences between people [and] learning to enjoy the differences you see in others” (Raatma, 2005, p.

5). As the fact that no two individuals are alike in this world even with identical twins, there are definitely differences between people that need to be considered in terms of social relationships. As people go through different stages in life, the need to relate with people is an inevitable part of their personal and professional development. It could go beyond that and affect the different aspects of their life. It is in this regard that people should learn the value of tolerance and adopt this in their everyday social relationships. With the situation being such, it is seen that the schools serve as the best place for educating individuals about tolerance. It is further supported by Miller (1994) when he mentioned that the school serves as a suitable place to exhibit the characteristic of being tolerant. This is in consideration of several factors that further strengthen the need for teaching tolerance in schools and its appropriateness for the said endeavor.

First, the atmosphere of learning that is existent in the schools serves as an important reason as it plays the crucial role of enhancing the learning process. It has been mentioned by Deming (2000) that the primary purposes of the schools include the preparation of students with their mindset looking forward and not in retrograde. Upon a review of the institutions established within any society, the schools are the only component which is seen to be the place where learning is facilitated and serves the sole purpose of applying the relevant education theories. As there are already agents, such

as the teachers and the administration staff, who could facilitate for the learning process in the appropriate environment, then teaching tolerance is a lot easier for the people. Second, there is already a ready-made curriculum which serves as a strong framework for which the activity where tolerance is taught could be incorporated. The inclusion of the said activities or modules for tolerance would be easier when there is already an established one in existence. Within the curriculum, the objectives, activities, and end-goals already established, it is easier to pattern the teaching of values similarly to how other values are introduced to the students and how these are likewise achieved.

Third, it is important that the setting suits the purpose of teaching. For that of tolerance, it is seen that the school also provides for a social environment through which the learners have the chance to directly apply the theoretical understanding they acquired or be given the chance to learn through experience as they are given guidance by their teachers. In the school, diversity of people exists whether it is that of race, gender, ethnicity, personalities, characteristics, beliefs, and others, which provides the student the chance to experience interacting with different types of people. In addition to this, the diversity within the schools provide with several advantages. It is stated by Johnson and Johnson (1989) that it leads to “achievement and productivity, creative problem solving, growth in cognitive and moral reasoning, increased perspective-taking ability, and general sophistication in interacting and working with peers from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds” (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1994, p. 57).

Their everyday social interaction with their diverse set of peers compels them to accept that there are indeed differences that they have to deal with as early as their preschool years. It is the same set of people they have to be with everyday and there is the need to belong. In Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is mentioned that the need for people to feel that they belong to the social group to which they belong (Stuart & Sarow, 2007). For children, this need plays a very important role wherein they are pressured to meet their peers and feel that they are indeed accepted. Fourth, John Locke emphasized the need for children to have a positive feeling attached to the notion of school that helps them exceed academically (Dunlap, 2004).

Bullying and discrimination has often been among the problems that are encountered by students as they go to school everyday. Despite the fact that they clearly understand the purpose of going to school, which is to study and gain knowledge, they also can not help the fact that they are demotivated to go through the learning process once they attach negative behaviors with their experience in schools.

As they go on each day feeling miserable with the thoughts of discrimination, the students could not reach their full potential academically. It is seen that discrimination, in this regard, is caused by intolerance as people are not able to accept the difference that every individual exhibit. Thus, there is the need for the teachers and the school administration to completely address the relative issues with regard to discrimination and other negative behaviors through the introduction of learning tolerance among the students.

This will not only add to their personal development but will further enhance the learning environment for the students. Fifth, to a certain extent, it would <https://assignbuster.com/teaching-tolerance-in-schools-essay/>

show that the faculty and the school administration clearly express their concern over tolerance and associated issues with the lack thereof. Being one of the strongest organizations that contribute to the development of the generation, it is important for them to clearly take a stand on these kinds of issues and take the initiative to provide for relevant training. It is also important to note that they are the ones directly involved in educating the students and are likewise with them for a considerable length of time during the day.

Sixth, bias towards authoritative figures exists especially for children in the schools. There is the natural tendency for people to have a bias towards the arguments posed by figures of authority (Whewell 1859). It is a common and undeniable picture that some school children give more credit to their teachers in terms of trust when it comes to academic-related concerns. For example, an elementary child comes home and discusses what they discussed in class that day as he/she is having supper with his/her parents.

When the parents consider one point to be erroneous, the child immediately contests and defends that what he/she said is true. The reason provided by the child is that his/her teacher mentioned the said argument and accepts it as a fact basing only on the authoritative figure of the teacher. Seventh, it is seen that it is best for children to acquire knowledge and relevant moral values during their formative years. It is mentioned by Kodály, as cited in Bartle (2003), that the during the formative years, which usually occurs in the first few years of primary school, the foundation for learning is built and knowledge provided for the student during this stage remains and is seldom forgotten.

As such, it is important that it is during these stages where the children are taught the proper values and tolerance is included in the list of such. Eighth, the sphere of education's goal encompasses the inclusion of tolerance as an aspect of learning. It is stated by Whewell, as cited in a journal edited by Henry Barnard, that: education is the process of making individual men participators in the best attainment of the human mind in general: namely, in that which is most rational, true, beautiful, and good... the several steps by which man is admitted, from the sphere of his narrow individuality, into the great sphere of humanity; by which, from being merely a conscious animal, he becomes conscious of rationality; by which, from being merely a creature of sense, he becomes a creature of intellect; by which, from being merely a seeker of pleasurable sensations, he becomes and admirer of what is beautiful; by which, from being merely the slave of impulse, he becomes a reverence of what is right and good. (1862, p. 11). Values are considered to be an important part of an individual and teachings towards the achievement of individual characteristics and moral values still constitutes the teaching of tolerance within an educational context. Likewise, the definition provided above of education does not only give the notion that it is purely of academic and leans towards the hard side of the sciences but also involves that of how a person could achieve their full being.

The school has to accommodate the most number of ideals that they could to bring the best out of each generation and achieve the purpose of education per se. On the other side of the fence, there are also counter-arguments that are directed towards the loopholes of using the schools as the setting for teaching the value of tolerance. First, it is noted that not all

individuals are given the chance to access the educational system especially for those with financial constraints.

There are a handful of individuals around the world which do not have the chance to provide for their basic needs and most especially for educating themselves and their children. However, it should be considered that there are several means provided to the members of the society for people to be able to make their selves educated and among these are availment of scholarship grants and financial support for learning. There is generous financial support which covers for the expenses associated with the education of the person availing for such. Likewise, there are also public schools which provide for a free or subsidized education for those who are interested and would pass the requirements of the said public education program. Second, the formation of clichés among peers also paves the way for arguments to rise against the notion of teaching tolerance for people. People having similar interests are given the chance to group themselves and share their interests further.

Clichés are formed for the purpose of enhancing their similarities but also lead to the discrimination of other people who they think are not within their sphere of liking. From the foregoing argument, it can be seen that clichés and tolerance could never fit together despite the fact that both have their own share of advantages in varying degrees. However, the disadvantages posed by the formation of clichés are far greater than that of teaching tolerance. This means that when the options are weighed, clichés would have to be dropped or taken at the minimum possible level for the purpose of a harmonious relationship within the school. There are several steps which

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could be taken in the formulation of a tolerance education plan for a school. It can be seen that there are several instances where the need for such is taken into account considering the arguments made above. The steps are easy that could start with the benchmarking of the level of tolerance exhibited by the students through appropriate operational measures for the concept of tolerance. After which a plan is formulated through brainstorming among the stakeholders that have an important role to play and this includes the teachers, the school administration, the students, and the teachers.

It is not necessary that everyone is taken into a single meeting and consultations to a considerable sample of the population would already do. Lastly, implementation according to the plan formulated would already be underway after relevant and extensive consultation is done. Assessment of the program also forms a part and should be conducted on a regular basis. From the arguments posted for the inclusion of teaching the value of tolerance, it is seen that it is an important aspect and would serve the purpose of both the students and the school, in general. It helps in preparing the generations and render them with holistic approaches to the personal and professional growth.

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