

Research



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Running Head: CHILDHOOD EDUCATION Diversity and Childhood Education
YOUR Diversity and Childhood Education Summary. In Wang and Aldridge (2007), the authors recognize that today's teachers face a significant increase in the diversity of culture and linguistic ability of their students. They also recognize that in spite of support efforts from schools and administrators, many teachers still feel that they are not well equipped to meet the needs of children and families from diverse backgrounds. The premise of the article is that the definition of diversity needs to be re-examined because it is primarily defined in terms of race or language. The authors note that this view unintentionally excludes many other minorities and tends to politicize the issue. This has resulted in losing focus on the real reason teachers should focus upon diversity issues, i. e., to better understand their students and help them learn in a heterogeneous classroom.

Personal Reaction. My personal reaction to this article is agreement. I think that diversity should extend beyond race and language to include other significant differences in the classroom. I agree that teachers should focus on providing the best possible learning environment.

Important Questions (3). When the word " diversity" is mentioned, what do you immediately think of? Should the definition be expanded? What are the advantages of heterogeneity in the classroom?

Summary. The article by Linda Pickett (2008) asserts that every child is, at its core, an intact human being. As such, they have a hunger for learning, an inborn sense of what is fair, and a desire for validation that, if given, is returned. She notes that in spite of these characteristics, society is war-torn and full of ethnic conflicts that require the cultivation of nurturing children in

their innate good qualities. In spite of the increase of social diversity, however, most debates in education focus on maintaining a competitive edge in global competition. Thus, she concludes, educators must find a way to bring families and children together as partners in fostering tolerance.

Personal Reaction. I agree that teachers can occupy a unique position to encourage diversity. I am not convinced that the primary focus of current education debate is literacy, math, and science, however. I think that diversity is a concentration point, if not a debate, in the profession.

Important Questions (3). How can teachers foster the innate goodness of young children? Is diversity taking second place to global competitiveness? If given the opportunity during early pre-school education, will children demonstrate tolerance as they develop?

Summary. In a very interesting article on poverty as a component of classroom diversity, Cuthrell, Ledford, & Stapleton (2007) provide a compelling story of a young student who would not let poverty be a limitation to his at-home playtime by asking teachers to save empty Kleenex boxes for him to use as building blocks. The authors work through the idea of poverty as a singular segment of diversity, discuss teacher training, and use compelling classroom examples to make their point.

Personal Reaction. This article touched me because before reading it, I tended to cluster poverty with other diversity classes such as culture or race. As a result of reading this, however, I see that poverty has the ability to be a stand-alone concern and that teachers should consider as part of their diversity awareness.

Questions. Is poverty a stand-alone minority consideration? How can teachers incorporate this consideration into the classroom? How does

poverty impact the student for the good, as well as the bad?

References

Cuthrell, K., Ledford, C., & Stapleton, J. (2007). Empty Tissue Boxes: Considering Poverty in Diversity Discourse. *Childhood Education*, 83, (5), 273-277.

Picket, L. (2008). Diversity Education: Respect, Equality, and Social Justice. *Childhood Education*, 84, (3), 158.

Wang, X. C. & Aldreidge, J. (2007). Re-examining Diversity Issues in Childhood Education: An Introduction. *Childhood Education*, 83, (5), 258-260.