

Teaching multicultural education

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TEACHING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION “ To be not just effective, but to be the Approach” Maitha T. Rasonabe CED-02-601A Rizal Technological University Special Topics in Education (PROFED11) Ms. Lynn M. Besa Instructor INTRODUCTION: “ Before we can transform the world, we must first transform ourselves” A demanding world that we are facing today challenged us to be a proactive teacher, a transformative one who is willing to start the change and engaged in a process of self-transformation. Teacher and student go together as well as the teaching and learning process, whereby the need for understanding cultural differences and the dynamics of culture contact in an increasingly diverse society is needed. Multicultural education promotes not only to teach “ what” is the content and “ how” to teach a particular subject area but it addresses that teachers must be responsive to honoring and celebrating the diversity of all the learners. That as teacher educators we must always consider that the learners is the center of the teaching and learning process. We must always think that an individual-learner is a complex well being with one or more differences that put gaps or boundaries to the learner and to the teacher. Multicultural classroom caters not only one set of learners; a “ classrooms are culturally diverse” and we need to uncover this diversity. There is diversity if children who are different in views and perspective are present. This article would like to address the need for a transformation in teaching inside the classroom. This would discuss the important features of Multicultural Education in a laymen perspective. This article would also like to persuade and inform teachers and students on the needs for the teaching of Multicultural education. To what should be a teacher in a multicultural classroom? How

should be the teaching and learning process? And what should be the implication of the teachers to their students? What is an ideal classroom setting and an ideal curriculum for learning in multicultural school? These are just some of the questions that I would like to address to you and I will try to give answers to these. DISCUSSION: The primary goal of multicultural education is to transform the school and to cater or to have equal opportunity to all the learners to learn. According to James Banks(2001), the primary goal of multicultural education is to transform the school so that the male and female students, exceptional students, and students from diverse cultural, social-class, racial, and ethnic groups experience an equal opportunity to learn. We do not simply mean a particular person or area for transformation but we are looking at the larger perspective for transformation. We have talked so much about Multicultural education; let us now focus with a deeper understanding on “ how” teaching of multicultural education will take place into a Multicultural Education Curriculum. What are the important features of the curriculum to be considered to avoid biased judgment and biased teaching? The seven (7) Key Characteristics of a Multicultural Education Curriculum by Paul C. Gorski. 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. * Lecture * Cooperative Learning * Dialogue * Individual Work * Student Teaching * Understand the dynamics of power in the room so you do not perpetuate privilege and oppression. * Who do you call on? * Who do you encourage to work through a problem and to whom do you provide the answer? * Challenge the notion of Teaching as Mastery. *

Ask students what they already know about a topic. * Ask students what they want to learn about a topic. * Ask students to participate in the teaching of a topic.

1. Content Content must be complete and accurate, acknowledging the contributions and perspectives of ALL groups. * Ensure that the content is as complete and accurate as possible. * " Christopher Columbus discovered America" is neither complete nor accurate. * Avoid tokenism—weave content about under-represented groups (People of Color, Women, Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual People, People with Disabilities, etc.) seamlessly with that about traditionally over-represented groups. * Do you present under-represented groups as " the other"? * Do you address these groups only through special units and lesson plans (" African American Scientists"; " Poetry by Women") or within the context of the larger curriculum? * Do you " celebrate" difference or study, explore, and acknowledge it as part of the overall curriculum? * Study the history of discrimination in curriculum and ensure that you are not replicating it. * Are supporting stereotypes (learning about Native Americans by making headdresses and tomahawks) or challenging them (learning about Native Americans through resources by Native Americans)? * Are you supporting or challenging the assumption that our society is inherently Eurocentric, male-centric, Christian-centric, heterosexual-centric, and upper-middle-class centric?

2. 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. * Does your history book show stereotypical or inaccurate images of people from certain groups or eras (ex. railroad

workers)? * Do your science materials use male-centric language? * Do your reading or literature materials have racist language or stereotypical images (ex. the Huck Finn debate)? * Does the language you use and the language your materials use assume heterosexuality, a 2-biological-parent household, American citizenship..? * Diversify images and content in bulletin boards, posters, and other constantly-visible materials. * Do you ALWAYS diversify, or only during special months or celebrations? 3. Perspective Content must be presented from a variety of perspectives and angles in order to be accurate and complete. * Present content from a variety of perspectives, not only that of majority groups. * How do we define “ classic literature” or “ great books” or “ the classics” and from whose perspective? * From whose perspective do we tell history? When is “ westward expansion” the same as “ genocide”? When are champions of “ liberty” the same as slave owners? * Present content through a variety of lenses, not just those of a few heroic characters. * Slave narratives to teach about slavery (not Frederick Douglas). * Slave narratives to teach about colonial Virginia. * Native American texts to teach about westward expansion. 4. Critical Inclusivity Students must be engaged in the teaching and learning process–transcend the banking method and facilitate experiences in which students learn from each other's experiences and perspectives. * Bring the perspectives and experiences of the students themselves to the fore in the learning experience. * Encourage students to ask critical questions about all information they receive from you and curricular materials, and model this type of critical thinking for them. * Who wrote or edited that textbook? * Who created that Web site? * Whose voice am I hearing and whose voice am I not hearing? * Make content and

delivery relevant for the students—facilitate experiences in which they connect it with their everyday lives. * Recognize your students as your most important multicultural resources.

5. 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. * Starting with the youngest students, incorporate discussions about difference and inequality into your lessons—this can be done across all subject areas. * How has misapplied science been used to justify racism and anti-Semitism? * Look for ways in which recognized names in various disciplines used their work and stature to fight social injustices. (It can be particularly powerful to find people from majority groups who fought certain types of oppression.) * Mark Twain * Albert Einstein * Eleanor Roosevelt * When an opportunity arises to address racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, or other forms of oppression, facilitate it. * Have honest discussion with your students about the history of privilege and oppression in your subject area, school, education, and society at large. * Connect teaching and learning to local community and larger global issues. * Encourage students to think critically about the United States, capitalism, the two-party system, and other traditionally untouchable subjects of critique.

6. Assessment Curriculum must be constantly assessed 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 These seven key characteristics help us to understand our

students and their background, to respond with their needs and to value their ideas, potentials and capabilities and most especially their feelings. We are not only after with the students Intelligence, we are more Affective in approach to be not just effective but to be an approach. We provide a non-threatening atmosphere. A place that is conducive for learning that eliminates any form of discrimination and biases. That the schools play an major role in helping students to develop the knowledge and skills needed to cross cultural borders and to perpetuate a democratic and just society. Multicultural education also features the idea of Reflective teaching. The proponent of the five dimensions of multicultural education Dr. James A. Banks had an interview on September 1998 issue by NEA Today Online readers. From that interview I'd knew the reason why he developed this five dimensions because he found out from his works with the teachers that many thought of multicultural education as merely content integration, so he developed the " five dimensions of multicultural education" to help educators see that content integration= putting the content in the curriculum is important, but it is only the first dimension and that multicultural education has at least five dimension. The five dimensions of multicultural education are as follow in lighter perspective. From different researches that I had I find hard to fully understand these five dimensions and my objective in presenting these five dimensions is to provide my readers an information that can easily understand which do not sacrifice the real meaning of each dimension. The first dimension is the content integration. That is how we get started. Teachers use examples to illustrate key concepts, we use the discipline through examples. Second, knowledge

construction in this teachers help students to understand, investigate, and determine the understood cultural assumptions and frames of reference and perspective of the discipline they're teaching. In other words we help student our learners to understand and also helps children to become more critical thinkers and readers and that is the knowledge construction process. Third, equity pedagogy with this teachers change their methods to enable students from diverse racial groups and both genders to achieve, teachers modify their teaching styles so that they use a wide range of strategies and teaching techniques such as cooperative teaching, the use of simulation, role playing, and discovery. Fourth, prejudice reduction it seeks to help students develop positive and democratic racial attitudes. It helps students to understand hoe ethnic identity influenced by the context of schooling and attitudes and beliefs of dominant social groups. Fifth, empowering school cultures it involves restructuring the culture and organization of the school so that students from different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and language group experience equality. We are looking not just at individual classroom, but at the total school culture to see how to make it more equitable. We are trying to get rid of this traditional conception of teaching that was " filling up the bucket", that if we talked about pedagogy, we are talking about teachers and students becoming learners together. The role of the teachers and students should be both active and not passive. In teaching and learning process where culture and background of the teacher is of different, let's keep it in our mind that it's not the race of the teacher, but a set of cultural characteristics that make the teachers effective with children of colors. Characteristics that knew the culture of children, who often live in the

community, who understood the daily lives of the students, who could relate to the students, who understand students verbal and non-verbal cues.

Teachers who made demands but warm demanders. Teachers who showed students that they cared. Teachers who had high expectation with their students, and believe with their students these are the characteristics of an Effective teacher. Teachers must have the good values and attitudes and experiences. How to be not just Effective but, to be the Approach Teachers have to be engaged in a process of self-transformation. It must start with us, “ before we can transform the world, we must first transform ourselves”, the process of reading, a process of engaging with others, a process of understanding that the other is us and we are the other. Teachers must do these three things. And that is to know, to care, and to act. That in order to bring this reform and to bring about this self-transformation, we need knowledge, that we cannot do this in ignorance. But knowledge is not enough, we also have to care. Horace Mann said to the graduates of Antioch College in 1859, “ be ashamed to die until you’ve won some victory for humankind”, so we have to care and we have to win victories. Those teachers can have these small victories. A victory once a day or once a week, in helping students feel needed, helping a student overcome, helping students feel better in school that day, it’s a small victory; a series of small victories. Finally, we need to act because as Dante said, the worst place in Hell is reserved for those, who in times of great moral crisis take a neutral position. We need to care and to act because in that way we can transform ourselves and help transform our world. As Margaret Mead said that “ A handful people can change the world. IMPLICATION: Multicultural education

is an approach to school reform, and movement for equity, social justice and democracy. It tries to provide students with educational experiences that enable them to maintain commitments to their community cultures as well as acquire the knowledge, skills, and cultural capital needed to function in the national civic culture and community. Embracing the pedagogy of multicultural education lead us also to promote peace to our students. We create mindset to our student to become critical thinkers, and to be sensitive inn all aspects of life. As stated above, the main point of view of this discussion is focus on the transformation of the school. But in order to bring about this change or transformation we must be reflective, we have to start within ourselves the transformation. As we always say; we cannot teach what we do not know, same with we cannot make a transformation to others without starting this in ourselves. Another is the KCA, the acronym that I gave to the process we should have for transformation. That is to know, to care, and to act, for ourselves and for others. The seven key characteristics discuss above, help us to uncover diversity in a classroom and to eliminate any form of discrimination and biases in teaching and learning process. That " education is for all", and we offer equal opportunity to our learners to learn regardless of their diverse culture, racial, socioeconomic status, cultural background, language group. To implement multicultural education, teachers and administrators must attend to these five dimensions of multicultural education. As future educators we must be aware of our student's differences. We must be familiar with the approaches, methods and learning styles that are applicable in addressing the needs of our students. We must be sensitive at all times and have the set of good values and characteristics

as teachers. That we are not only responsible in teaching our lessons but we are also responsible in building good values, attitudes and experiences to our students. Multicultural Approach cultivates a school environment that celebrates diversity, support mutual acceptance of respect for an understanding of human differences. References: Gorski, Paul C. 7 Key Characteristics of a Multicultural Education Curriculum. http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/resources/ct_characteristics.html Banks, James A. and Tucker M. "Multiculturalism's Five Dimensions. "NEA Today Online. <http://www.learner.org/workshops/socialstudies/pdf/session3/3.Multiculturalism.pdf> Multicultural Education-History, The Dimensions of Multicultural Education, Evidence of the Effectiveness of Moral Education. <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2252/Multicultural-Education.html#ixzz2L0tTcMZs>