

The case for multicultural education

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The Case for Multicultural Education Venica Blythe Diversity and Achievement EDU507. 90 Prof.

Joseph Paige The Case for Multicultural Education Who am I? I am a Female, I am Black, I am Jamaican, and I speak Patois (Jamaican dialect). All the things I just mentioned are just a fraction of who but these same things have been used on numerous occasions to form a stereotype against me. I am also a mother, wife, and an educator. None of the things that I have listed will by itself adequately tell you who I am, but as I stand before you today I want you to understand fully my purpose for being here.

My name is Venica Blythe and I am here to promote multicultural education in all our schools curricula.

Being an educator for well over a decade I have come to realization that there is a great need for Multicultural Education (ME) Banks (1994) recommended a multicultural curriculum that would teach minority ethnic groups how to free themselves from psychological captivity, stress social action, acquire humanistic dispositions toward all ethnic groups, realize power and ethnic identity without being chauvinistic and ethnocentric, and acquire the national identity and skills necessary to participate completely in the society.

What is Multicultural Education? Multicultural Education (ME) can be defined as developing a curriculum that will incorporate all facets of the varied races and cultures that are found within any classroom. Such content will be taught through instruction designed for the cultures of the several different races in an educational system. Bennett (2011) estimates that “ by the year

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2020, children of color will exceed forty-five percent of the school-age population in the United States” (p. 16).

It is because of such numbers why policy-makers and administrators can no longer pretend as if there is no need for educating both the students and the teachers.

An ME will help to foster a reduction of fear and ignorance that exists in many races against people from diverse backgrounds. The Need for ME The case for a multicultural education is even greater as American schools continue to become more culturally diverse. The aim of a ME is to create equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of their race, ethnicity or culture.

This can be achieved in such a way that it reflects diverse groups found in the society, schools and even in the classrooms (Banks, 1995, 1996; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998). Sleeter and Grant (2006), Bennett (1990), Banks (1994), assert that the inclusion of ME in the curriculum of schools creates an atmosphere where racial attitudes and academic achievement are improved. Decades ago, the concept of ME emerged out of the civil rights era in the U. S. But I am here to tell you today that presently, in the 21st century the U. S. is not alone in the struggles to build a case for a multicultural education. The European continent, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and even Japan are just a few of the countries that now have to consider the implementation of ME.

The effects of immigration and even natural disasters have resulted in these countries attempting to cope with the diversity that now exists in their

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society. To better prepare our student for the 21st century ME is not only for the primary level, colleges and universities must also play a critical role.

A survey done by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), on diversity requirements done in August 2000, involved responses from 543 colleges and universities. In this survey, 62% of the respondents reported either already having a diversity requirement or being the in process of creating one. 83% of those institutions with requirements offer “ one or more courses addressing diversity in the U. S.

“, and 65% offer “ one or more courses addressing diversity outside the U. S. “.

These numbers are evidence that the issue of ME is being promoted throughout higher education; our college graduates MUST learn how to be effective and competitive in the 21st century by mastering the skills needed to work, live and build positive relationships with people from varying background. Conclusion Take Precious from the same titled 2009 movie, Precious (Daniels, Magness, & Siegel-Magness, 2009) was an overweight, African American, teenage mom struggling to finish high school because of her illiteracy.

As I watched the movie I remember thinking that many aspects of it was too crude, but the sad reality is, there are many Precious at the school where I teach. These Precious's are from Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Dominica Republic, and Haiti - just to name a few of the different cultures we work with. As I work with these students I found my self often times forcing them to adapt

to the American way, especially since as I was making an effort to do the same.

Today, I say to you go back to your schools, go back to your jobs or even your communities and make an effort to know that student, know that person that you have been avoiding or the student that you seemingly find difficult to deal with and seek to understand what their “ Sparks” are - what is it that student loves to do. Multicultural education can help to develop the sparks in all our students; it will help them to learn how to embrace the differences that lies within them and others.

According to Gabelko and Michaelis (1981) and Lynch (1987), the reduction-of-prejudice dimension of ME is geared toward helping students acquire more democratic values, behaviors, and attitudes. According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP; 1996), ME should be considered in connection with the school’s curriculum, instructional practices, and staffing. In the end, education ought to equip students for the interdependency life of the 21st century (NASSP, 1996, p. 68). How do you plan to equip yourselves and your students for the 21st century? References:

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