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Multicultural Education Implemented in Elementary Schools

Angelica Villegas

California State University, Monterey Bay
Abstract

This paper analyzes the importance of having multicultural education being implemented in elementary schools. The participants for the Capstone Project included twenty two first-grade students in a public elementary school located in California’s Central Coast. In this project the participants go to hear a picture book being read to them that focused on the understanding of multiculturalism what multiculturalism is and how it can be seen. The participants go to hear about two different cultures from two different location from the world and the focus point of their diversity. The participants go to see this through the art interpretation that the book author showed in the book. The participants then go to create their own piece of artwork about their own world that showed their diversity. In this project you are able to discover that multicultural education can be implemented and included in a classroom environment in a strategic way that can create engagement and interest in the participants. This Capstone Project connects to my Liberal Studies career path by creating a diverse classroom environment that makes everyone included despite everyone’s differences in my future career.

Keywords: multiculturalism, diversity, elementary schools


**Literature Review**

Public schools have been more diverse due to the fact that the nation is being more culturally and ethnically diverse. The population is becoming more multiracial and this population includes students that are being enrolled in public elementary schools. Due to living in a multiracial and diverse world, students have a need, which is to be helped to become successful in their academic schooling and also showing them the importance on how to interact and collaborate with other peers that are coming from different backgrounds. This literature review will examine and cover the importance of multicultural education being implemented in elementary schools, how the implantation can take approach with different recommendations from different research fountains that have made the incorporation of this context.

Multiculturalism education was said to be started by the people of color back in the year where there was discrimination towards the people of color during the civil right movement in the late nine sixties. Multicultural education at this time was brought up as an implementation in the educational field due the targeted institutions during the civil rights movements. Multicultural education was demanded by the people of color that were parents, teachers, students, leaders and community people so that racial diversity can be more persistent. Stated by Paul Gorski, in the article, *A Brief History of Multicultural Education*, states that there was a lot of unequal rights in the education system that everyone was aware of and that was when multicultural education was brought into the schools inside their classroom, “Together, the separate actions of these various groups who were dissatisfied with the inequalities of the educational system, along with the resulting reaction of educational institutions during the late 1960’s and 1970’s, defined the earliest conceptualization of multicultural education” (Gorski).
When multicultural education was being included inside the classrooms during this time, there were changes made all over that impacted the staff, administrators, students and the environment.

Diversity within the school systems have been increasing as students are being enrolled in a variety of different schools. Due to the population increasing and being more diverse, there is a need for multicultural education to be implemented in schools, “the importance and need for multiculturalism in education has been well documented by researchers” (Baohn M Ebbeck p.33) stated in the article *Incorporating Multicultural Perspectives into Teaching Approaches*. The need for the implementation of multiculturalism in school settings is being acknowledged and seen by various individuals. The implementation starting at an elementary level can be efficient and help promote the knowledge of students differences, “For multicultural education to be effective, it must be introduced in the early years and reinforced throughout the school years” (Berthelsen & Karuppih p.38), stated in the article *Multicultural education : The Understanding of Preschool Teachers in Singapore*, by Donna Berthelsen and Nirmala Karuppih. There can be a great influence being created by teachers in a student’s early childhood education that can establish good attitudes for others. The perception of multicultural education should be followed not only in a student’s elementary years, but in all of their educational years, “cultural awareness must be transcend into integrated actions in all aspect curriculum, and at all grade levels (Childs p.34), stated in the article *Integrating Multiculturalism in Education for the 2020 Classroom: Moving beyond the “melting pot” of Festivals and Recognition Months*, by Kamshia Childs.

Multicultural educations should be followed in a student’s educational create the acknowledgement within oneself and of others differences.

The importance of implementing multicultural education in elementary schools is to teach individuals to acknowledge, respect and embrace difference. It encourages and provides
settings for individuals to come into acknowledgement of their own culture and ethnicity, “culture is the way we think, feel and behave as a society. We are born into a culture and through socialization process we learn about our culture which ultimately represents our reality and out world view (Chinoy & Hewitt, 1975, Cruz-Janzen, 2000; Gollnick & Chinn 2002)” (Gayle p.1), mentioned in the article *It is Never too Soon: A Study of Kindergarten Teacher’s Implementation of Multicultural Education in Florida’s Classroom*, by Guda Gayle-Evans. Each students lives in world that differs from other students and it is stated by the Gayle-Evans that it is okay to live in a different world, “Although it is extremely important that children learn about their culture, it is also important for them to learn that not everyone is the same.” (Gayle p.1). Multicultural education can have students realize that everyone might live in a different world but at the same time can be the same. This can also help student realize that their world can be greater than in the community that they live in. Difference is seen within an individual based on appearance, language, ability and other factors. Multicultural education can promote to perceive the differences from each student, “while all societies value their children, their traditions differ and primary-grade students can view and appreciate these difference on their own consciousness level.” (Pyszkowski), said in the journal article *Multiculturalism- education for the nineties an overview*, by Irene S. Pyszkowski. Students first have to value themselves and value where they come from, referring to their background, culture and ethnicity, in order to bring awareness to other cultural differences. Stated in the article, *Incorporating Multicultural Learning in Clinically-Based Education in the United States* by Miu Ha Kwong, “equally important for students to work through their own uncomfortable feelings with their own cultural background as well as others through a group of learning process, (Kwong p.854). Having students acknowledge difference with first accepting that
Knowing that the world has a diverse population that differentiate from various ethnic and race groups, not having students learn at an early age about these different diverse groups can create problems that might cause these students to have trouble and problems with interacting with others in their future. Teaching students at a young age about multiculturalism can be a practice to apply the equality of all students’ backgrounds, culture, language, skin color and values. Multicultural education is not only just implementing certain holidays and certain hero’s being brought up once a year in the classroom, but actually applying the teaching of diversity groups and their culture, values and beliefs. Having multicultural education can be beneficial both to the students and the teachers. The teachers can learn more from students and can be able to meet their needs and it also bring awareness in the understanding of their student’s differences between their different backgrounds, attitudes and behaviors.

Multicultural education has various goals that are able to be accomplished and reached when implemented into a classroom. In the article *Multicultural Education Issues and Perspectives*, by James A. Banks and Cheery A. McGee Banks, stated that one of the important goals of multicultural education is to provide growth in students’ consciousness, “major goal of multicultural education is to help students to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function within their own micro cultures” (Banks p.25). Multicultural Education can be implemented in elementary schools in various different ways. Having multicultural education applied in a classroom curriculum can increase students learning by matching learning styles with teachers strategies. Finding the correct approach to teaching students can create students to be motivated to learn about multiculturalism and can have teacher meet each student’s needs. Teachers can apply strategies into their curriculum and lesson plans where students can learn more about change, empowerment, equity and justice in a way that they can understand these
different factors at their young age. Learning from student’s backgrounds, culture, values and beliefs can promote the social action of the students no unknown groups rather than their own.

Different implementations can be done in order to teach about multicultural education in elementary schools. Using different books; picture books, chapter books, textbook, etc. Can be used as a source to teach about diversity and multicultural education. In the article *Using Picture Books to Expand Adolescents' Imagining of Themselves and Others*, by Cheryl Taliaferro, stated that picture books can be used to teach different cultural aspects of an individual, “For centuries the books used to teach reading have also served as a means of transmitting cultural values, concerning areas such as religion, work and patriotism, to the youngest members of society (Resnick and Resnick).” (Taliaferro). Pictures books can create a visual and be used as an observation to see diversity within different cultures and backgrounds that bring to an understanding that everyone is different and unique. Another option to implement multicultural education in elementary schools is creating lesson plans that involve having activities that create a discussion on diversity within the students, “Integrating classroom activities and discussion that demonstrate diversity and multiculturalism is a focus of this learning objective” (DeLuca & Kelly), stated in the article *Multiculturalism in the Classroom*, by William V. BeLuca and Daniel Kelly. This integration can have students practice communication skills and interaction skills with one another in a classroom that can have a diverse range of students. An example of this implementation can be having students share stories about their culture or traditions. Another example of implementing multicultural education in elementary schools is creating assignments that can contribute into student’s cultural beliefs or nation beliefs. This will also allow students to learn more about their culture or a different culture and can be related to certain topics that the students are studying at that time.
The researcher, with the information that was done in this literature review will create a lesson plan that implements multicultural education in an elementary school classroom. The goal of this lesson plan will be to teach students about diversity and the differences between individuals. The lesson plan will be referring to one of the suggestions provided in the literature view, using pictures books, to have students acknowledge certain differences from different cultures and backgrounds.

**Project**

Option 1: 5 E Model Lesson Plan

In this section of the project, the writer will discuss the lesson plan that was created as well with a brief explanation of the process that was done to implement this lesson plan to the community partner profile that was conducted in a first grade classroom in the central coast in California. Data that was provided by the School’s Accountability Report Card (SARC) in 2018, shows that the majority of the students attending this elementary school are considered to be Hispanic/Latinos and a low percentage are considered to be other minority groups like; black or African American, American Indian, Filipino and Anglo-Saxons. The writer of this project took into consideration that implementing a lesson plan on multicultural education to this group of students can bring awareness of cultural diversity and differences in other cultures and ethnicities.

For this project, the writer implemented the importance of multicultural education being implemented in elementary schools. Multicultural education is intended to increase interactions and create understanding from peers that have differences yet are still similar. Multicultural education can improve social action by noticing change and can create empowerment and equity between peers in a classroom. Multicultural education can create a transformation in peers by
having multiple views, empathy and aware of all different subjects. Multicultural education is an approach that can promote a relationship between a student’s home and school environment, can encourage the implementation of various perspectives, can build awareness of different ethnic groups and can promote and encourage positive attitudes about living and working within a multiracial community. The write implemented this importance by doing a project that reflected on the importance and ways that multicultural can be implemented in a lesson plan in an elementary classroom.

**Engage**

In regards of drawing the audience attention for this project, the writer thought about a strategy that will keep the students both engaged and interested when conducting the lesson plan. To initiate this project, the write connected this topic of multiculturalism by opening up the lesson with question that involved to think about the students background and roots. The writer choose a picture book that is under the appropriate standard reading level for the community profile classroom students that the students will be able to comprehend and understand the concept and meaning of the book. There are questions that are being asked to the students before and during the process of reading the book so that the students can also have an opportunity to think and elaborate on what they are seeing and hearing. The writer provided positive praise to those students that volunteered and gave their input.

**Explore**

As the project, the lesson plan, was being worked on, the writer thought about the different strategies that the students are able to learn without having the writer take over the whole lesson and letting the students know what the moral message of the lesson was. The writer made the prediction that the students will be able to recognize that multiculturalism has been a
factor that they have been through in ways that the students have not thought about before. For this lesson plan, the writer would like for students to come together and work as a team to discover their own world and how it differentiates from others, after reading the picture book called *Same, Same but Different*, by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw.

**Explain**

For this lesson plan, the writer opened up the activity with some question regarding the topic that was trying to be implemented, which was multiculturalism. The writer started by giving a short summary of what the book was about to the students in the classroom, which then lead to asking questions in relation to the book. Question we’re as followed; has anyone traveled outside of the United States? If so, a second question followed that asked them where they have traveled. There was time for responses in between questions so the students can share with their classmates. Another question asked was, did it look different than where you live? These questions got the students to think and analyze the two different places and find differences and possible similarities between the two different places. Students then mentioned to the writer some differences that they noticed from The United States in comparison to another country. As the students were done sharing with their peers, the picture book was read to the class using the Elmo monitor from the school, where it reflects the book through a camera into the screen so that the whole class could see. The writer read the book in a strategy that involves reading a page and having the students share what they see in each illustration. This had the students also analyze and observe details that they saw in the book. Question developed from reading the pages comparing the lives of two different kids living in two different countries but having things in common just being a bit different. After reading the book, there was a worksheet that was followed afterwards to have the students make a connection regarding the story. The worksheet
was instructed in Spanish due to the fact that the community profile school is under a dual emergent program where ninety percent of the class is taught in Spanish and ten percent of the class is taught in English. The worksheet consisted of having the students draw their world and what surrounds them. The writer elaborated to the students that they can include customs, traditions, manner or transportation or input anything that makes their world unique and interesting. The picture was follow by a written description of that the kids drew. This whole project was broken down into two parts, where the reading was first conducted and then had a recess break in between and when the student returned back from their break, the students worked on their worksheet. The writer walked around the classroom to observe the students working and was available to assist any student that needed help. At the end of this paper you can see images that show the students working on their worksheet, the picture book as seen in image one, was left on the Elmo projector so that the students can reflect back on some illustration from the picture book that was read to them. The rest of the images, image two through image seven, shows the students writing or drawing to complete the worksheet. This project was assessed by a rubric that consisted of an informative or explanatory writing assignment. It was broken down into five possible score that ranged from 0-4. Each having different criteria met for each score section.

Elaborate

As the students worked on this lesson given and presented to them, the students were able to meet the standards of comprehension in the classroom. Students learned a new definition. Pen-pal, which was first directed with a question if anyone knew what a pen-pal friend was. There was a few students that volunteered to share what their definition was and surprisingly they were correct. The correct definition was then stated to the class so that all students were aware and
understood what a pen-pal friend was. The students during this lesson plan were engaged and focused when the writer presented the picture book to them. As a discussion was lead on each illustration page, the students were able to think, share and elaborate on what they were being read. Students were able to label the different factors that differentiate from both world of the characters from the picture book. The students were able to see both similarities on how these two different characters lived in two different environments that managed the same action being done but in a different approach.

Evaluate

The students were evaluated based on the worksheet that was created by the writer for the lesson given to them. There was a rubric that was used for the assessment and evaluation for the assignment that was broken down into five different categories that were labeled with numbers zero through four. There are some examples of the completed worksheets that the students created at the bottom of this paper. Some students have met somewhat of the comprehension and grading rubric sections but as you can see there is still more room for improvement with the grammar and orthography content with these first grade students. Some success that were seen in this project what the contribution and engagement of students that was seen when reading the picture book to them. Students were collaborating and sharing similar observation that they were able to relate to with the class and their peers. Students also were able to conduct a drawing that expressed themselves and their own world that demonstrated diversity and differences within the classroom peers. Some challenges that were encountered was some misunderstanding when working on the worksheet that followed the reading portion of the lesson plan. Many students were excited about drawing their picture that when it got to them to conduct the writing portion many of them were having trouble starting their explanation or had trouble relating the pictures
to words. There was also student work that was not turned in that was not precise to what was being asked to do, or the writing was not readable or understandable. The goal for this project was for students to think about their background and ethnicity and be able to recognize their differences. The goal was barely met as indicated by the evidence provided done in this lesson plan. There was a few students that met the criteria of elaborating and relating their picture to their own world, whereas there was students that related or compared and contrast their worlds to the worlds that were mentioned in the book. There could have been more guidance when explaining the worksheet to the students and an example could have been conducted with the students as well. Writing techniques and strategies could have been reviewed before allowing the students to create an explanatory paragraph.

Table 1. Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The response has one or two sentences complete. It includes precise information from the text. The writer utilized grammar and sentence structure correctly. The response has little to no errors with capitalization, punctuation and orthography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The response has one or two complete sentences. It includes information from the text. The writer utilized grammar and sentence structure correctly. The response has little to no errors with capitalization, punctuation and orthography, but has no trouble with understanding the meaning of the response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The response has one or two relevant phrases that are complete or semi complete sentences. It includes some information from the text. The writer has many grammar errors and hinders the understanding of the general meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The response has no complete thoughts or sentences. It does not show comprehension based on the information from the text. The writer uses little usage of correct grammar or the norms to which hinders the understanding of the general meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The response does not correspond to the writing pattern or it is not complete.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Image 1. This image shows the student working on their worksheet that was conducted after reading the picture book.
Image 2. This image shows a student working on their assignment that was being asked to do after listening to the picture book.
Image 3. This image shows student working on their worksheet.
Image 4. Image of student working on worksheet in class.
Image 5. Indicating student working on worksheet.
Image 6. Shows student working on her drawing.
Image 7. Student working on writing portion of worksheet.
Dibuja una imagen detallada de tu propio mundo. Incluye características que lo hacen especial y único. Abajo de tu dibujo, explica en un párrafo sobre lo que dibujaste de tu mundo.
Dibuja una imagen detallada de tu propio mundo. Incluye características que lo hacen especial y único. Abajo de tu dibujo, explica en un párrafo sobre lo que dibujaste de tu mundo.

Mi mundo es muy interesante que me gustaría compartir con ustedes. Primero, mi mundo hay muchas casas muy bonitas, y muchas carros. Después, el día de mi cumpleaños mi mamá hace tamales para comer y mi papa compra una piñata muy bonita. También, en mi mundo hay mucho tráfico muy largo. Finalmente, estas son algunas razones que gustaría compartir con ustedes.
Dibuja una imagen detallada de tu propio mundo. Incluye características que lo hacen especial y único. Abajo de tu dibujo, explica en un párrafo sobre lo que dibujaste de tu mundo.

En mi mundo hay muchas cosas que te quiero decir. Como los autobuses son diferentes. Mi ciudad no es tan grande. Pero lo creo que tu ciudad es muy grande. Los carteles son diferentes de mi estado. Finalmente no todos son iguales.
Dibuja una imagen detallada de tu propio mundo. Incluye características que lo hacen especial y único. Abajo de tu dibujo, explica en un párrafo sobre lo que dibujaste de tu mundo.

Mi mundo es interesante porque hay bis cletas bonitas. Y mi papi tiene mucha gallina y mi abuela tiene muchos años. Y mi abuela mi tía. Los quiero y tengo una casa blanca. Y yo y mi papi los divertimos.
Dibuja una imagen detallada de tu propio mundo. Incluye características que lo hacen especial y único. Abajo de tu dibujo, explica en un párrafo sobre lo que dibujaste de tu mundo.

Dibuja una imagen detallada de tu propio mundo. Incluye características que lo hacen especial y único. Abajo de tu dibujo, explica en un párrafo sobre lo que dibujaste de tu mundo.

Mi mundo es un poquito igual a México. Primero, mi mundo habla en inglés y México habla en español. También, en México se suben en caballos y en mi mundo algunos personas se suben en caballos. Finalmente, lo que es igual en mi mundo y México es porque hay unos ciudades en México y en mi mundo hay un ciudad también.
Reflection

In this section the writer will reflect upon the whole Capstone Project. The writer will discuss and wrap up the lesson plan that was created and implemented in the community school. The outcomes of the project will be discussed in this portion of the paper that will elaborate on the positive and constructive improvements that can be made to make this project. Recommendations that the writer suggests and has for this project will be mentioned in this section of the paper as well. The writer will also mention how this project can be implemented in the writer’s future plans and will conclude with a conclusion from the whole research and project done.

Discussion

In the lesson plan created in this Capstone Project the goal was for students to understand and learn more about multicultural education in their classrooms by implementing work that involved learning about diversity. The lesson plan, like mentioned before, involved the students hearing a story about two diverse cultures and places around the world that do similar actions but different due to their background. The outcome of this lesson plan was at a state for improvement but went well overall. It was seen that some students understood the concept of the followed activity as in hearing the story and also saw some students that needed better explanation or guidance in order to conduct what was being asked from the activity. Based on what was researched by the writer, the writer found that implementing and teaching multicultural education can promote beneficial factors in to a student's life especially implementing at an early start of their schooling. As early as multicultural education starts, the students are able to grasp on to the understanding that interacting with a diverse group can benefit the students in the future when communicating and interacting with others.
Recommendation

For this lesson plan there is definitely room for improvement and modifications. As a recommendation for this lesson plan, there can be a background knowledge check regarding geography and the study of the map students to understand the different terminology when identifying and labeling the different places and location mentioned from the book, the students are able to recognize the differences of distance that this picture book from the lesson plan refers to. This will allow the students to know more about the different places that will be mentioned in the reading and preventing students to frequently or hesitate to ask questions regarding the different places.

Another recommendation that was thought of was having the writer model an example of the worksheet that was made that followed after reading the picture book. This recommendation was thought of due to the fact that some work done by the students were not really clear and precise based on the instructions given on the worksheet. By providing guidance when working on the worksheet for the students, can create a structure and example that the students can follow and have a finish product that can meet the criteria that was directed in the instructions from the worksheet. Also providing an example of what is being asked to do can benefit the students that are struggling in how to approach the task that is being asked to do. Modeling first can create the assurance of what they plan to create and write about in the given task. Another recommendation that can be taken for this project is reviewing over writing guidelines for this grade level (first grade). Going over the writing guidelines can help students review how to structure a writing exercise that might be given to them. Going over transitioning words and sentence structure can have students refresh their minds when being asked to do writing prompts and in this case it would be beneficial to go over these guidelines.
Future Plans

This project can be implemented in future plans by creating classroom environments for future educators that promote diversity. This can be a method or approach of reading diverse books that can teach and show students in pictures how a diverse the world that they live in without realizing it. A way to build on this Capstone Project in the future as part of my career can be by implementing different recommendation and improvements that were observed and noticed after the first try of the lesson plan created. Implementing multicultural education in a classroom can be beneficial by promoting positive interaction skills with other with different backgrounds. The implementation of multicultural education can promote social action, contributions and transformation within in students. Promoting change, empowerment equity and justice, fun, learning, empathy and various point of views of everyone in a classroom and outside of the classroom.

Conclusion

The importance of multicultural education in a classroom environment can promote positive aspects in the lives of the student in many different ways. The writer in this project reflected on what was done and what could have been done to make improvements. As seen and heard by the writer, multicultural education in school setting can benefit both the educator and the students. This implementation in schools settings can create a welcoming environment that allows students to learn from one another.
References


Appendices
Appendix A

Multicultural Education Lesson Plan

The lesson plan was created to teach students about multiculturalism and about diversity in different cultures. With the population being more diverse, it is important for students to acknowledge and learn about their own culture and differences as well as to know more about their peers culture and differences.

Learning Objective: Students will be able to conduct a drawing that follows with an explanatory paragraph that presents a point of view on their own world that they live in.

Grade Level: 2nd grade

State Standard: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.1.A Recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g. first word, capitalization, ending punctuation).

Procedure:

1. Teacher will start off lesson by asking students if they have read the book before
2. Teacher will go over vocabulary that students might not know (pen-pal: a person whom one becomes friendly by exchanging letters, especially in a foreign country whom one has never met).
3. Teacher will read the book to the students. Teacher will stop at each page and ask students what they observe and see.
4. After reading the book, Teacher would provide students with a worksheet that followed the reading
5. Teacher will go over directions with students and will ask if there is any question or corners, teacher will answer any questions that are asked and if not teacher will walk around the room to supervise that students are working on the worksheet.
Assessment: Students will be assessed based on the following grading chart.

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Additional Resources: Picture Book; *Same, Same but Different* by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw and also provide students with worksheet created that followed the reading portion.
Dibuja una imagen detallada de tu propio mundo. Incluye características que lo hacen especial y único. Abajo de tu dibujo, explica en un párrafo sobre lo que dibujaste de tu mundo.