Cultural Diversity in the Curriculum and the Classroom
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The United States of America was founded upon the principle of *E pluribus unum*, in many one. We have yet to realize that ideal. Schools play an important central role in achieving this noble goal. Teachers can help children understand, appreciate and practice unity in diversity. Yet our curricula and classrooms have failed to reflect this high and vitally needed ideal that will make this country a great nation and a model for the rest of the world. Our schools are held solely or mainly responsible for the prejudices that have arisen from our diversity, but they bear a special responsibility to do much more to eradicate the prejudices that have infected the body of our nation.

Our schools have not provided enough opportunities for students to learn about those who are not in the privileged classes of our society. Below are some suggestions for helping children and youth better understand and appreciate the rich and valuable diversity of our world. These suggestions have been adapted from some earlier papers by the author and other sources, especially *Teaching Young Children to Resist Bias* published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

- Study the scientific foundations of diversity and the oneness of humanity.
- Consider the planet as our home with the nations and regions each contributing something special to our lives.
- Learn a language/culture different from your own.
- Teach human relations skills, conflict resolution and consultation as ways of solving problems and dealing with differences.
- Expand students' loyalty/identity to include all humanity.
- Help students to develop the citizenship skills and civic character needed to become effective and contributing citizens at all levels of society.
- Make and enforce rules that preserve and enrich the dignity of all peoples.
- Observe and apply the principle of unity in diversity in all curricular areas.
- Encourage positive interaction among people who are different from one another.
- Involve the parents and the community in addressing human relations concerns.
- Understand the nature of culture and the causes of prejudice and discrimination.
- Recognize the diversity and prejudice that exist in ourselves and society.
- Create prejudice-free classrooms that do not allow "put downs" of others' identities.
- Provide materials, activities, experiences, assessments and environments free from bias and discrimination.
- Model prejudice-free language, attitudes and behavior.
- Empathize with others and help them build healthy self-concepts without developing a sense of superiority.
- Teach an accurate knowledge about differences and the contributions of different groups to our world.
- Teach how to constructively respond to stereotyping, bias and discrimination.
- Study how racism, sexism, classism and other forms of discrimination have had a negative impact on individuals and society.
- Help students develop the conscience, commitment, character and capabilities to bring about positive change.
- Talk openly, positively and honestly about children's different physical and cultural characteristics.
- Follow and promote the golden rule.
- Create a positive and united learning community that celebrates the uniqueness of all its members.

We can change our ignorance to knowledge, hate to love, injustice to justice, conflict to unity, and violence to peace. We can positively respond to cultural diversity in our curricula and classrooms, and in the process, make this a better world for all of us.

Selected Bibliography of Author's Works Related to Unity and Diversity


