The Benefits of Understanding Cultural Diversity in Education

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Diversity

- The term "Diversity," race, language, age, faith, culture, ethnicity….." has direct effects to the growth of children.

- Research shows that more diverse environments increase all students' level of critical thinking, raise levels of their knowledge and awareness, challenge assumptions, and raise levels of their contact connections and communications.

A multicultural learning situation brings with it a number of challenges that need to be overcome to create an effective learning environment for every student. These aspects such as communications(different languages), learning preferences (the manner in which learners understand and retain information), and social values (values that differ from culture to culture) all contribute to the learning environment.

- Schools are places where people who come from numerous private worlds and social positions are brought together on common ground. If schools have firm, fair, consistent, and positive discipline supported by the democratic conditions, this interaction in schools can help children develop the habits of thinking and caring necessary for public life: courtesy, tolerance, respect, sense of justice, and the knack for forging public polices.

Teachers should pay attention to the actual diversity in the class, both appreciation of differences in the class, & alertness to unintended reproductions of inequality, disadvantages, stereotypes, and misinformation based on group identities.

- Although the civil rights movement had a significant effect on changing racial and cultural interactions in this society, we still observe daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental conflicts (whether intentional or unintentional) that communicate hostility and insults toward people of a different race, other culture , ethnicity, religion, etc…..

- Teachers and school administrations should know the culture and background of students.
- Students know who they are, and help them to know each other.
- There should be a conscious effort to bring in diverse perspectives represented in examples and teaching materials in our teaching.
- Teachers help the students learn the adaptability, flexibility and adjustments to a new cultural environments.
- Teachers should address multiple learning styles and interactive processes.

- Teachers should rethink how to present information and how to connect with students in a classroom.

- Teachers should pay attention to how school addresses the need of diverse students and if there are support programs available for students who are not meeting the standards.

- Schools should be proactive in assessing needs of diversity for example, "Does the school have a cultural fair assembly to highlight diversity?"

- There is a need to build adequate bridges between the schools and the family. Making parents feel safe, valued, and wanted takes a proactive set of activities. Parental involvement is essential to ensuring all children's success.

Knowing our Students

- Why might it be useful to know more about our students experience of difference, if we want to create inclusive classrooms?

- What is it that we want to know about our students in relation to difference & inequality?

- What do we think our students need to know about themselves and also about each other?

- Does the school track high and low ability grouping? If so, observe if there are racial or ethnic patterns in these classes that show inequality.

  Three actions should be taken by teachers:

1. Increase the variety and frequency of interactions among students who are different from one another.

2. Orchestrate these contacts so that competent public talk and deliberation about common problems are fostered.

3. Expect, teach, and model competent and inclusive deliberation. Concentrate not only on the open expression of honest viewpoints, but on the receptive practice of listening.

Five Principles of Pedagogical Practice to Foster Students Engagement across Social and Cultural Differences

1. Balance and acknowledge both the emotional and the cognitive components of the learning process.

2. Acknowledge and support the personal and individual dimensions of experience, while making connections to and illuminating the systemic or structural dimensions of social interactions.

3. Pay attention to different norms about social relations and communication patterns that emerge in the classroom or within small group interactions.

4.Utilize personal reflection and individual or group experience as tools for experiential student-centered learning.

5. Explicitly value the development of awareness, growth and social change as outcomes of the learning process.

Conclusion

We can teach our students to think critically about America's past and help them to recognize that they can play a role in creating a fairer and more equitable society in the future.

Address the controversy of diversity in schools.

Multicultural education is broadly defined, takes many forms and has an impact on every aspect of the school's operation including: staffing, curriculum, testing, disciplinary policies, students, parents, and community involvement.

- Anxiety about addressing diversity may also depend on the comfort level of the administration and school board and the relationship with the parents and the community.

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