

Diversity/Multiculturalism in the Classroom

TCH 347 Social Studies in the Elementary School

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Characteristics of Diversity

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Culture
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Language and Dialect
- Giftedness, Disability
- Multiple Intelligence
- Social Economic Status

Nature vs. Nurture

- A culture is the values, beliefs, and customs.
- Culture is learned, not born.

Two Views on Cultural Difference

- Deprivation (Cultural Deficit) Model: children who are culturally different are thought to be deprived – worse off because of their home cultures.
- Differences (Pluralistic) Model: Assumes that schools need to teach children of all groups. Schools too often are not ready for children of different cultures. Teachers need to view cultural differences as strengths, resources, and funds of knowledge

Pitfalls in Multicultural Classroom

- Ignore differences among children: --
“Color blind”
- Over sensitive to cultural differences among children: -- “Let the children choose”
- A middle way – Individualized instruction

Individualized Instruction

- Traditional Definition is based on
 - Ability
 - Development
 - Intelligences
- In addition to the traditional definition, contemporary definition also encompasses
 - Race, ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, language, and more...

Six Guidelines for Teaching in Diverse Classrooms

- Bridge the cultural/class gap
- Know your “Knapsack”
- Vary the medium
- Expect greatness
- Vary the viewpoint
- Group and regroup

Guideline-1

Culturally Responsive Instruction

- Learn about the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the children and adapt instruction accordingly. Teach in ways that bridge the gap between children's home cultures and the school culture.
- Learn the language the student speaks and use it to greet him/her
- Affirm his/her cognitive styles

Guideline-2

Knowledge of Your Own Family History

- Teachers need to study their own family history – its cultural and ethnic characteristics, language, migrations, dialects, religion, social values, etc.
 - Cultural “knapsack”
 - Visit culturally different neighbors

Guideline-3

Multimedia

- Provide variation in the ways children acquire social studies information, think about it, and express what they are learning.
 - Graphs, charts
 - Dramatizing Underground Railroad

Guideline-4

High Expectations for Learning

- Expect, assist, cajole all students to learn the social studies curriculum.
 - Call on girls as well as boys
 - Encourage limited-English-speaking children to use other activities to express themselves

Guideline-5

Multicultural Curriculum

- Help children understand concepts, events, issues, and historical figures from diverse viewpoints.

Guideline-6

Flexible Grouping

- Whole class group
- Group on common interests
- Group on special needs
- Cooperative pairs
- Peer-tutoring pairs

Sexual Orientation

- First step, teachers need to acknowledge that differences in sexual orientation exist in the United States and in the world.
- Beyond simple recognition of the facts, teachers can also point out discrimination against homosexuals just as they point out discrimination against other groups – religions, races, languages, or against woman.

Gifts and Talents

- **Individualized instruction:**
 - Tiered Assignments
 - Independent study
- **Two cautions:**
 - Learning challenges are not disadvantages unless the child is in the situation where the disability or disorder gets in the way.
 - Educators' conversations about exceptionality are loaded with labels that are double-edged swords

Cautions about MI

- Avoid trivializing the curriculum and stereotyping children
- MI theory should not be used to peg a child as this or that
 - Children's intelligence are changing
 - Everyone has strengths and weaknesses across the plurality of intelligence

Famous Sayings

- “I disapprove what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”
 - French philosopher: Voltaire
- It takes a village to raise a child.
 - African proverb
- Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.
 - Confucius
- Seven falls, eight ups.
 - Japanese proverb
- He who treads softly goes far.
 - Brazilian proverb

Terms

- Demography
- Discrimination
- Subordination
- Profiling
- Prejudice
- Racism
- Stereotyping
- Ethnic group membership
- Social power
- Social position
- Acculturation
- Volunteer immigration
- Self-esteem
- Frame of reference
- White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant (WASP)
- Sex-role behavior
- Ethnocentric