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Diversity and the Need for Multi-Cultural Education



Final Paper: Diversity and the Need for Multi- Cultural Education Outline

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a. Summary of the paper

Diversity and the Need for Multi - Cultural Education

There are many countries around the world that are composed of many different individuals. There are people of many different ethnicities, races and tribal groups that contribute to a country. With the many different ethnicities, races and tribal groups, there are a vast majority of different cultures that other people around the world may not know about. Nonetheless, that is what sets them apart and makes them different in their society or country. For example, British people may not be aware of the Native American history/culture in America and why they acted the way they did. Also, Americans may not know about the history/culture of Yoruba's in Africa (tribal group) and why they are the way they are. The lack of knowledge one has on another person's culture, ethnicity or race can affect the relationship or friendship between people. The need for cultural education around the world is significantly important so that everyone can be aware of the different groups and people around us and not be oblivious to the many different individuals in the world today. This paper will be discussing the importance of the need for multi-cultural education in schools.

Lack of Cross-Cultural Understanding

Today, there is an extensive lack of cross-cultural understanding in society. Many are not aware of the different ethnicities, races and groups around the world and the history of these individuals. This is because they are not taught or informed about the culture of these societal groups. Cross cultural understanding is when someone is relating or trying to connect to another culture that is not their own to better understand that person or people from that group. For one to start their journey on cross cultural understanding, one must understand the culture of a person. Understanding a person's culture is in terms beliefs, norms, values, symbols, languages,

and laws as these are just a few features that composes culture. According to “Symbols, Values & Norms: Crash Course Sociology #10”, symbols are “anything that carries a specific meaning that’s recognized by people who share a culture.” These symbols can be seen through art or artifacts. Oftentimes, families carry on a tradition with passing down a valuable artifact from generation to generation that symbolizes something significant and valuable to their family. In terms of symbols, the national flag of my country has a positive symbolic meaning to my country. Based on my week 2 discussion board, each color of the national flag of St. Vincent and the Grenadines symbolizes a feature to the country. For instance, the blue represents the sea and the sky, the yellow represents our golden sand on the beaches and the sun, the green represents our fresh vegetation and the diamonds represents all the 32 Grenadine islands that we have. Moreover, groups all have different norms and values that makes them unique in their own ways. In the text, “Difference between Norms and Values of Society” norms are expectations or rules that determines how people should and should not behave in situations, while on the other hand, values are just general standards that decides what is bad and good. They may seem like they are similar, however, they are not. Norms are more pertaining to individuals’ behaviors. There are different forms of norms which are folkways, taboos, laws, and mores. According to “Cultural Norms: What Are They? And How Do They Relate to Values?” folkways correspond with right vs. rude, mores are a connection between right vs. wrong, taboos deal with right vs. forbidden and laws are right vs. illegal. In a society, laws are more prominent because that is what carries out day to day life in a country. Everyone follows and conforms with laws which are the right things to do in society. If they do not follow or break those laws, they are faced with negative consequences. On the other hand, values pertain to beliefs and attitudes of an individual or group. Values and beliefs relate to each other as “values are deeply embedded and critical for

transmitting and teaching cultural beliefs” (Sociology). Additionally, the two differ across cultures because every culture does not have the same norms or values. For instance, the norms in America and Latin America are completely different from each other. As stated in my week 3 discussion board, in Latin American Culture, it is a norm for women to stay at home and tend to the family and children while the men go out and provide for the house and family financially. However, in America, it is a norm for both men and women to go out and work and provide for their families compared to Latin America. As for values, they differ for each culture too. In Caribbean culture, it is expected for one to always have respect for their elders. Also, the thought of education is the only way to get you out of poverty is another value in the Caribbean. This value is different within the American society. As times continue to evolve, you do not need education in America to maneuver in society. Many use social media as a job to evolve and survive on in society without having an education.

Although these features contribute to culture, they too do play a part in socialization. Understanding someone’s culture through their norms, symbols, values, and beliefs results in better interaction between that person and another person. As a result, there will be a learning process in which one develop their own personality through adapting one’s culture (Socialization). This will help for easier acceptance of one’s societal norms, values and beliefs in a culture and helps with functioning and interacting sufficiently in society. Through communication this is achieved. There are many different forms of communication which includes verbal and nonverbal communication. Through language individuals can express their thoughts and feelings. This is a part of verbal communication that helps individuals interact with each other. In addition to verbal communication, gestures and expressions are part of nonverbal

communication that individuals use to communicate as well. All these aspects help with cross-cultural understanding another and close the gap of the lack of understanding cross culture.

My Cross- Cultural Experience

As stated in the previous paragraph, cross-cultural understanding is relating or trying to connect with another culture that is not your own. There are different cultures that have different norms, values, languages, traditions and more that makes them unique. Through my cross-cultural experience, there will be a better understanding and connection of my culture. To allow this, one must let go of their cultural relativism to better connect with my culture. Based on “Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism” it explains that cultural relativism is the practice of assessing a culture by its own standards rather than viewing it from the lens of one’s own culture. This usually creates biases because individuals judge other cultures or groups of people through the eyes of their own culture instead of learning about that culture. Through my presentation of my own cultural experience, it should take away from any biases one has about my Caribbean culture. This will help with the lack of cross-cultural understanding and help inform and educate others about my culture.

Based on my midterm presentation, my family is from St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This island is part of the Caribbean, so my culture is connected to the Caribbean culture. The culture based in St. Vincent and the Grenadines was influenced by “Amerindians, European, East Indian, British and West African culture” (St. Vincent History & Culture). The main language spoken there is English. However, there is also Vincentian creole spoken there. According to “Communication across culture”, language is important because it give individuals a sense of identity and allows for social interaction. Language gives a group a sense of identity which connects to their culture and who they are. The main dishes there are breadfruit and jackfish,

bakes and saltfish and callaloo soup. There are many religions practiced there, however, my family practice spiritual Baptist which is another main common religion practiced there as well. Moreover, there are many different traditions in my country which are Nine mornings, Vincy Mas, Independence Day celebration and soca monarch. Along with traditions, there are many different sports played there as well. These include cricket, netball, and football. All these aspects contribute to my Vincentian culture and makes us who we are today. This presentation of my culture should help inform and educate others of other cultures about the Caribbean culture in order to assist with cross culture understanding.

The Effect of the Lack of understanding Cross- Cultural in society

Due to the lack of understanding of other cultures, there has been a negative impact towards various groups, races, and ethnicities in society. As mentioned before, many individuals go through cultural relativism which results in assumptions and biases towards another culture because they are not open to learning about that culture. They are only aware of their own and not willing to learn about another. As a result, this usually results in racism, stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudice done by one group to another group based on those assumptions and biases. There are many different races and ethnicities around the world, these include Hispanics, Blacks, African Americans and more. As stated in my week 11 discussion, race is used to categorized individuals who share the same biological traits and ethnicity are individuals who are socially constructed based on cultural traits rather than biological traits. Most of the times, certain races and ethnicities are considered minorities in society. These groups include African Americans, Mexicans, Asians, and Hispanics. They are faced with racism, discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes from the majority group in society, Whites. According to my week 11 discussion, prejudice are judgements that one holds against another group,

stereotypes are generalizations made about groups of people, discrimination are actions taken against a group of people and racism is the belief that one racial group is superior or inferior to others. Minorities are faced with all four in society whether it is in friendships, at restaurants or at their jobs. It results in a difficult living for them in America, especially on a day to day basis. For example, stereotypes could have been seen in America during the 1960s that targeted African American citizens. Through many different things in society such as Aunt Jemimah, Jim crow, Jezebelle and the Mammy. These figures basically portrayed African Americans in a negative light showing to the public that they are awfully bad individuals. For instance, whites used Jezebelle to as this image of the “Bad Black girl” that “represented the undeniable sexual side of African American women” (Negative Racial Stereotypes and Their Effect on Attitudes Toward African-Americans). This shows how a superior group portrays another group in a negative way that will possibly put fear into others about that group leading to more racism and discrimination. Not only are they faced with those consequences, but they too are also faced with racial and ethnic inequality in society. In week 11 of my discussion board stated that racial and ethnic inequalities can be seen in society through wage gaps, education gaps and health gaps. The cause of this is the way society is set up. Since, African Americans or Hispanics are considered minorities, they are more likely to experience wage gaps and education gaps that will limit them from succeeding or moving up in society compared to those who are White. This is because Whites are more privileged in society based on the color of their skin, compared to minorities who are of color and are considered inferior. Furthermore, an educational gap between African Americans and Whites was used during the 1960s. Through the literacy test, the government and polling station administrations (whites) took advantage as a tool to prevent African Americans from voting in elections in the United States. In the text “The Louisiana

Literacy Test” it explained that the literacy tests targeted African Americans by preventing them from voting by designing the test unnecessarily hard. Since majority of African Americans were uneducated during this time, they had a difficult time taking this test. Additionally, the test was created difficult because they knew it was impossible for an African American to answer any question on it because they did not have advanced education like whites. This shows the racial and ethnic inequality between the two by using African American disadvantage of not having an education to prevent them from voting.

Moreover, based on these restrictions placed on minorities, social groups started emerging at this period. Their target goal was to make a change through their voices by protesting. During the 1960s, one of the most popular social organization that emerged was the NAACP. Some of the goals of the NAACP are to provide educational, political, social, and economic equality, remove discrimination against African Americans through the democratic process and attain equality of rights (About the NAACP). Through some of the most historic members of the organization such as Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, some changes were able to be made. Additionally, based on the frequent racism and killings done by whites and police against African Americans today, there has been many social groups that have been created based on these events. Social groups such as Black lives matter, All Lives Matter, and other small organizations in favor of African Americans have been created since. Moreover, questions on the nature of racism, diversity and multiculturalism in the country have been raised. Through the social movements, they have been able to protest and fight for equality and more rights for the diverse majority in society. Based on the Black Lives Matter organization, its goal is to eliminate white supremacy and create a local power to intervene the violence occurring in the Black Communities. Through its large influence on social media, it has caught the eyes of

many others around the world that also wants to contribute to the change for African Americans in society. Furthermore, social movements and organizations are vital in that they give minorities the platform to have a voice and speak out about the injustices done to them and they promote the need for change to the government through their platform as well.

Justification on multicultural education in the 21st century

Multicultural education should be more available for students in schools around the world. Multicultural education becoming more available for students in schools results in students of different races and ethnicities to have the opportunity to learn about the many distinct races, ethnicities, and social groups around the world. This education will have a positive impact on students as well as how they maneuver in their societies in the future. They will be able to appreciate their culture as well as other peers' cultures and interact with each other better. Based on my observations on racism, racial discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice done against African Americans around the United States, this education will help with the knowledge that people need to know to prevent further injustices done against any minority whether Hispanic, Asian, Muslim, or African American. According to "Multicultural Education: Goals and Dimensions" the goal of this education is "to help students acquire the knowledge and commitments needed to make reflective decisions and to take personal, social, and civic action to promote democracy and democratic living." Through the information that students will be attaining through multicultural education, it would have an impact on the decisions that they would make in the future against others. Based in my week 15 discussion board, the result of multicultural education on individuals is to help them become more aware and understanding through the learning of one's history and culture. This education will likely result in students growing "up to be adults who likewise promote equality and justice" (What Is Multicultural

Education? An Educator's Guide to Teaching Diverse Students). Hence, this means that there would be a possibility for less racism, less discrimination, and less killings against minorities in the future. They would be more moved to participate in society to make a change, expressing their civic rights based on the information they gained from multicultural education as they are now “inclusive adults, free from racial or ethnic biases” (What Is Multicultural Education? An Educator's Guide to Teaching Diverse Students).

Recommendations

For multicultural education to be available for students, schools need to incorporate multicultural education in their curriculum. For instance, providing students with classes such as a multicultural class, diversity class, African American and Caribbean class. These are simply different varieties of ethnic and racial classes that they can incorporate within the curriculum. This can be seen at York College where Political Science majors and any other majors that are interested can take Caribbean politics classes, Latin American Politics classes and Black Women History classes. Myself along with some of my friends, were able to have a seat in some of these classes and learn new information about these ethnic and racial groups that we did not know about. Moreover, with incorporating different diverse classes schools can also incorporate activities that includes or deals with that student’s culture. These activities may include projects, presentations, and storytelling to their peers about their culture or their parents’ culture. This way others in that class can be informed about that culture based on the information that was said. Next, another way is to incorporate cultural lessons based on a holiday in that country. For instance, a teacher can integrate lessons about different African American historical figures based on Black history month. Also, holidays such as “Martin Luther King Birthday and Cinco

De Mayo” are other ethnic holidays that teachers can use to inform their students (Multicultural Education: Goals and Dimensions).

In addition to multicultural education being incorporated in the classrooms for students, it too can be incorporated in the community and the society. Through policymaking and laws, the government can country policies and laws that can be inclusive for all. This means that it will target the diversity in the country and ensure that everyone feels included and wanted in society. For example, France is not very inclusive towards their minorities in society. France become the first European country that “passed a law prohibiting people from wearing clothing in public that covers your face” (Warner, 2020, pg. 1). This is a target to Muslims and Muslim women in France as they do wear clothing that covers their face in the form of Hijabs. This is a part of their culture and through this law, France is not being very accommodating. It does not promote multiculturalism nor diversity within the country as it is seen as a target. The penalty in being caught with a hijab is “punishable with a fine and citizenship course” (Warner, 2020, pg. 1). Moreover, France could become more inclusive towards Muslims within their society, if they understood Muslim culture more and sympathize with them as to why the need to wear hijabs are important to their culture and make a change with the law in reverting it.

Lastly, there are many groups around the world that might benefit from my recommendations on the incorporation of multi-cultural education in schools and the society. These groups include the Department of Education, teachers, the president/prime minister, the government, parents, minorities, and interest groups. These individuals taking my recommendations into consideration can help with change and promotion in multi-cultural education within their society.

Summary

To conclude, culture is the most significant aspect of someone's life. It connects them with their identity and helps them to educate others on where they are from and what differentiates them from others. Even though one is aware of their own culture, does not mean that they are aware of the other cultures out there in the world. In addition to that, they may not be aware of the different aspects of culture. Through multicultural education, all of that can be achieved and result in easier interaction in society amongst others. Multi- Cultural education is necessary as it helps with student's engagement within society in the future. In understanding ones cultural and being informed about it can lessened the number of biases, discrimination and prejudice against minorities and other social groups. Through cross-cultural education, the willingness to learn and be aware of other cultures results in the multicultural education in schools something to look forward to. Even though there are already schools who incorporate multicultural education in their schools, others do not. Everyone should be able to have access to this type of education as it is significant to the way we maneuver in society. Through this education, many should want to make social change to make everyone feel included in the future.

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“About the NAACP.” *NAACP*, 22 June 2020, www.naacp.org/about-us/.

In this article, the organization gives an overview on the NAACP organization. It includes how it was created and the target goals and agenda of the organization. Also, it includes some of the accomplishments the organization was able to get done since the creation of it.

“About.” *Black Lives Matter*, 16 Oct. 2020, blacklivesmatter.com/about/.

In this article, the Black Lives Matter organization gives an overview on the organization. It includes the spark of the creation of the organization, the target goals, and agenda of the organization. Also, it includes how it influenced social media and how it sparked influence from all over the world.

Learning, Lumen. “Introduction to Sociology.” *Lumen*, courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-introductiontosociology/chapter/ethnocentrism-and-cultural-relativism/.

In this article, it provided information on ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. Through thorough explanation, it defined the two terms and how they work on individuals and in society.

Learning, Lumen. “Sociology.” *Lumen*, courses.lumenlearning.com/alamo-sociology/chapter/values-and-beliefs/.

In this article, it provided information on values and beliefs and defined the two terms. Through connection, they were able to connect how values and beliefs relate to culture and how it works within different cultures around the world.

**“Multicultural Education: Goals and Dimensions.” *UW College of Education*,
education.uw.edu/cme/view.**

This article provided information on multicultural education in terms of the goals and dimensions of it. Through explanation, it defined multicultural education and how it can be incorporated within the curriculum at schools as well as how beneficial it will be towards students and teachers.

**Mondal, Puja. “Difference between Norms and Values of Society.” *Your Article Library*, 14
Apr. 2014, www.yourarticlelibrary.com/society/difference-between-norms-and-values-of-society/35068.**

In this article, Mondal examines the difference between norms and values of society. Through connection, the author shows how norms and values work within society so many can have a better understanding to how it relates to culture.

**“Negative Racial Stereotypes and Their Effect on Attitudes Toward African-Americans.”
*Negative Racial Stereotypes and Their Effect on Attitudes Toward African-Americans -
Scholarly Essays - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University*,
www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/jimcrow/links/essays/vcu.htm.**

Based on this article, it presents different racial stereotypes other groups have on African Americans and the negative impact these stereotypes have on African Americans in society. It presents stereotypes that started from the 1960s to contemporary times.

Samovar, Larry A., et al. *Communication between Cultures*. Cengage Learning, 2017.

The authors, Larry Samovar and others created a textbook on the communication between cultures. Through different aspects on cultures, it presents individuals with information about culture, the different aspects of culture and how important communication in cultures is.

“Socialization.” *Adapting One`s Culture*, explorable.com/socialization.

This article defines and explains the process of socialization. Through thorough discussion, it helps one to understand the process and how socialization is significant to the society.

“St. Vincent History & Culture.” *St. Vincent History & Culture : Discover St Vincent And The Grenadines*, www.discoversvg.com/index.php/en/stvincent/history.

In this article, it presents the history of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It helps inform others about the history and culture of St. Vincent in order to better understand the country.

“Symbols, Values & Norms: Crash Course Sociology #10.” *YouTube*, uploaded by CrashCourse, 15 May 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGrVhM_Gi8k&t=512s.

In the CrashCourse video, it explains what symbols, values and norms are. Through thorough explanation, the video was able to define what these three terms are and how it connects with cultures around the world.

“The Louisiana Literacy Test - February 2012.” *The Louisiana Literacy Test - 2012 - Question of the Month - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University*, <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/question/2012/february.htm>.

In this article, it explains the literacy test that was given to African Americans during the 1960s. Through thorough explanation, it presents how the literacy test worked and the negative impact it on uneducated African Americans.

Warner, Gregory, et al. "From Niqab To N95." *NPR*, NPR, 27 May 2020, www.npr.org/2020/04/28/847433454/from-niqab-to-n95.

The authors, Gregory Warner and others, discuss the issue that is going on with Muslims in France. They present the law that banned Muslims from wearing hijabs in France and the effect it has on them and their culture.

"What Is Multicultural Education? An Educator's Guide to Teaching Diverse Students."
What Is Multicultural Education | American University,
soeonline.american.edu/blog/multicultural-education.

In this article, it presents and define multicultural education. Through explanation, it defined multicultural education and how it can be incorporated within the curriculum at schools as well as how beneficial it will be towards students and teachers.

Wittwer, J. "Cultural Norms: What Are They? And How Do They Relate to Values?"
Success Across Cultures, 13 Jan. 2018, successacrosscultures.com/2018/01/13/cultural-norms-what-are-they-and-how-do-they-relate-to-values/.

The author, Wittwer, talks about cultural norms and values. Through the presentation the aspects of cultural norms and values, he shows the connection that they have towards culture.