Intercultural Education in Preschool

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Introduction

Motivation:

Current Situation:
- Increase in cultural diversity;
- Growing number of immigrants in Portugal;
- Starting with the African Portuguese colonies and later the integration of the European Union.

Personal Background:
- Teacher born and raised in Malawi
- Mother has a preschool in Malawi

Image 1: Globe
Question:

1. Why is multicultural education important for twenty-first century preschool education?
2. How is multicultural understanding meaningfully integrated into early childhood education programs?
3. What strategies and tools are effective when teaching multiculturalism in the preschool classroom?

Study Goals:

1. Increase understanding of multiculturalism in Early Childhood Education, present strategies for planning and implementing a multicultural curriculum.
2. Demonstrate to educators the benefits of a Multicultural Exchange Project.
“…build greater equality of opportunities between women and men, between individuals of different social classes and different ethnic groups.” (OCEPE, 1997, p. 54-55)

“It is a movement that calls for new attitudes, new approaches, and a new dedication to laying the foundation for the transformation of society.” (Gorski, 2001, p.1)

“…develop the ability to communicate and encourage social interaction, which creates identities and a sense of belonging to humankind.” (Citizenship Education Guidelines, 2013)

“From a very young age, children may begin displaying gender and racial preference and may develop prejudices.” (Souto-Manning, 2013, p.1)

Studies show that multicultural education should begin in the early years (Abdullah, 2009; Souto-Manning, 2013; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011)
Multicultural Literature:
“Stories, writing them, telling them, sharing them, transforming them, enrich us and connect us and help us know each other. ” (Rochman, 1993, p.19)

Multicultural Music:
“Singing and teaching songs in other languages reflect various cultural styles.” (Tarman and Tarman, 2011, p.587)

Multicultural Art:
“Multicultural art is not only equipping students with knowledge, but it also has a powerful element to promote unity. ” (Yaya and Yousif, 2014, p.17)

→ Multicultural education is the response to this diversity
→ Literature, Music and Art serves as a valuable teaching tool
Multicultural Exchange Project

- **Research Design:** Case Study between two schools in two countries (Portugal and Malawi).
- **Date:** Started at the beginning of November 2014.
- **How the Project was suggested:** School Theme - the five continents and personal background.
- **Participants:** Two five-year-old classes.
- **Explanation:** Based on the experience from the Violet class.
Multicultural Exchange Project

Project Goals:

- Give a sense of *solidarity* and *friendship*;
- Prepare students with *knowledge, values, attitudes* and *skills*;
- Build *understanding, respect* and *acceptance* of diversity;
- Learn about and be in contact with an *unknown country*.

Data Collection Methods:

- Interviews
- Observation
- Photographs
- Group Discussions
- Field Notes
Activities
Presentation Books

- Book exchange.
- Handmade puzzle of the Portuguese flag.
Activities

Image 4: Painting results of the Malawian flag

Image 5: African Puzzle
Activities
Literature, Music and Art

- **Reading** Malawian story books.
- **Listening** to CD *Chisangalalo Songs of Joy*.
- **Painting** by sight.

Image 6: Painting
Image 7: CD-Cover
Activities
Skype Calls

- Students presenting themselves.
- Singing songs.
- Saying goodbye at the end of the project.
Results of the Project

Teachers’ Interview:

Category A- Strategies
“All the tools used were always very well planned and implemented.”

Category B- Benefits for the Children
“The discovery of another country...provided the children with great moments of learning, sharing, respect and solidarity.”

Category C- Teachers’ understanding
“Exploring multicultural education in preschool is important to help overcome ethnic and racial barriers.”

Observations and Daily Reports:

- Preschoolers retained and recalled new information with great detail.
- High participation.

Discussions in the Classroom:

- 35% skype
- 25% salami
- 15% photos
- 15% 10%

Image10: Answers from the Violet Class
Conclusion

Multicultural Education:

- Teachers responsibility to prepare students for the future;
- Transform Early Childhood curriculums to reflect our diverse society and the differences between citizens;
- Serves as a valuable teaching tool to open children’s mind to understanding, respecting and accepting differences among people.

The Multicultural Exchange Project:

- An example with positive results of how educators can plan and implement multicultural learning into a preschool curriculum;
- Children can learn about diversity through literature, music, art, games and social interacting;
- Help eliminate prejudice and racism
- Acknowledge, value and respect differences and similarities.


Thank you!

“Obrigada”

“Zikomo”