

Cultural Awareness and Cross-Cultural Communication Module - Part 2

Designed by Helen Tinsley

Agenda

Objective: For participants to engage in readings, individual and small group activities to increase their level of consciousness pertaining to diversity, racial and cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication. This module also includes hands-on activities that teachers can implement with their students to build community and foster cultural appreciation within the classroom and activities to facilitate family engagement.

Welcome and Logistics

Introducing the Topic

Poem: I Dream a World by Langston Hughes

Follow up to questions/comments from Part 1

Activity: First in The United States

Activity: First to New Jersey

Video Clips & Partner & Small Group Sharing

Discussion: Into the Classroom (handout)

Activity: Special Person in your life

Discussion & Activity: Multicultural Activities for Early Childhood Classrooms

Group Sharing: Family Engagement Projects

Shared Reading: Thank You Mr. Falker

Closure

I Dream A World

By Langston Hughes

I dream a world where man
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind-
Of such I dream, my world!

Into the Classroom: TDSI

Jacqueline Jordan Irvine ^[1]

What does culturally relevant pedagogy look like in the classroom? Researchers who have studied this topic (including Ana María Villegas, Tamara Lucas, Beverly Armento and Jacqueline Jordan Irvine) have identified the following examples of culturally relevant instructional behaviors:

- Involving students in the construction of knowledge
- Building on students' interests and linguistic resources
- Tapping community and home resources
- Helping students examine the curriculum from multiple perspectives
- Using a variety of valid assessment practices that promote learning
- Using examples and analogies from students' lives
- Instituting a positive classroom climate
- Developing positive relationships with parents and community
- Understanding students' cultural knowledge and experiences and selecting appropriate instructional materials
- Helping students find meaning and purpose in what is to be learned
- Using interactive and constructivist teaching strategies
- Preparing students to effect changes in society
- Helping learners construct meaning by organizing, elaborating and representing knowledge in their own way
- Using primary sources of data and manipulative materials
- Aligning assessment with teaching through activities like teacher observations, student exhibitions and portfolios.
- **Source URL:** <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/classroom-tdsi>

Guidelines for a Child-Centered, Multicultural Classroom

1. Recognition of the diversity in the children.

A child-centered classroom recognizes that children bring with them specific knowledge and skills they have acquired through membership in a particular group of people. The teacher then draws from and builds upon the customs and traditions that the child brings to the classroom, as well as the students current experiences in the community where he or she lives. Recognition of many cultures in an early childhood classroom calls for on-going planning so that every child will have a healthy self-image and a positive awareness of others.

2. Acquiring knowledge of the children and their cultures.

The teacher should form partnerships with the care-givers of the children they serve, with community resources and with the children themselves in order to identify and make use of the children's capabilities in the introduction of new learning activities. Through such partnerships, teachers first collect information on the developmental characteristics and cultural/environmental experience of the children and then select and arrange materials in their learning spaces to reflect the present cultures of all the children in the classroom.

3. Creating a positive, anti-biased environment.

Teachers could carefully review commercially available materials for the classroom, such as: books, table toys, manipulatives, games, dolls, posters, clothing, pictures and accessories to identify those that accurately represent aspects of the collaborative experiences of the children in the classroom.

Teachers should utilize community resources to construct additional materials needed to represent the children in their classroom.

4. Observing and recording students interests and using the data to inform instruction

Once the classroom environment begins to reflect the children; teachers closely observe the children's use of the materials and equipment, and note the interests, knowledge, interactions and skills the children display. Teachers should make anecdotal notes and record children's language and conversations. The teachers should then use their observations as the foundation for designing new learning activities for children, always building the introduction of new concepts on those that the children have already acquired. Teachers should make a conscious attempt to use materials that represent aspects of the cultures of the children and families and the community in which they live.

Ideas for Learning Centers that have a strong embedded multicultural aspect

Conduct developmentally appropriate early childhood activities using items that the children bring from home, or from their personal experiences.

- Daily read-alouds of multi-cultural literature that depicts families in authentic ways.
- Bring in empty boxes or empty cans of food (with no sharp or jagged edges) to use in the dramatic play area (from foods that children eat at home)
- Reading familiar labels and environmental print for visual and sight recognition.
- Cooking recipes from various homes/cultures related to the children and families of your classroom.
- Taking field trips to familiar community establishments that are diverse: neighborhood grocery stores, beauty parlors/barber shops, fire department, post office, hospital, etc. Creating a community collage or books with photos of their experiences incorporating children's dictation.
- Bring in manipulatives from home to use in counting, sorting and patterning activities (such as: buttons, coins, stamps, fabric swatches, dolls.)
- Family engagement activities: Parents record lullabies, songs, books on tape, stories - oral and/or written; singing culturally reflective songs, playing diverse instruments.

What multicultural activities can you implement to build family engagement?