

**An initiative with a Multicultural Perspective, Enhancing Teaching- Learning Process so as to
Develop Global Citizens**

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ABSTRACT: The world has become a “borderless village” and there is an increase of interdependence among the countries along with the threat of a, “clash of civilizations” giving rise to the issue of multiculturalism, and thus, its place in education, is becoming more & more important. School is considered to be a miniature that reflects cultural diversity. The present paper is an attempt and an initiative to develop creative and innovative teaching methods to enhance teaching-learning process that will impact students’ thinking and emotions about cultural diversity and help them to become global citizens. Hence, A Vadodara City based Central Board School in Gujarat, India, along with the partner schools of Coventry & Scotland, drew a detailed yearlong action plan and conducted various projects & activities. A remarkable & significant teaching –learning was observed, and the project proved to be a grand success, receiving International school award (2012-2015) from British Council, wherein the teacher and the taught both were benefitted.

Key Words: Cultural Diversity, Multicultural Education, Global citizens

INTRODUCTION

India is enriched by the ethnic, cultural, and language diversity among its citizens and schools. A School is considered to be a miniature that reflects cultural diversity. Diversity in the nation’s school is both an opportunity and a challenge.

Majority of our school going children in India speak their mother tongue other than English at home, due to transfers, transmigration, student- teacher exchange programmes, immigrations taking place the world has become a “borderless village”. There is an increase of interdependence among the countries, there is also a threat of a “clash of civilizations” which gives rise to the issue of multiculturalism and its place in education, is becoming more & more important. The significant fact here is that although the Indian students are becoming increasingly diverse, but most of the Indian teachers may or may not be diverse. A deliberate and conscious effort has to be undertaken to promote respect and acceptance of other cultures rather than just to tolerate them and therefore, “Multicultural education” is of paramount

importance in the twenty-first century (Banks & Banks, 2001)

The need to create a teaching force that is culturally sensitive is indisputable. According to The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2001) teacher candidates must develop proficiencies for working with students from diverse backgrounds; dispositions that respect and value differences, and skills for working in diverse settings. There is need for teacher educators to develop creative and innovative teaching methods to enhance teaching-learning process that will impact our students’ thinking and emotions about cultural diversity and help them to become global citizens.

As, “*Cultural differences should not separate us from each other, rather cultural diversity brings a collective strength that can benefit all of humanity*”- Meghan O’Donnell.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: Multicultural education is intended to decrease race, ethnicity, class, and gender divisions by helping all students attain the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need

in order to become active citizens in a democratic society and participate in social change Valdez (1999). It is imperative that teachers learn how to recognize, honor, and incorporate the personal abilities of students into their teaching strategies (Gay, 2000). If this is done, then school achievement will improve and the students will develop holistic personality.

While conceptualizing this paper and reviewing the literature it was observed that the area has been extensively researched for in-service & pre-service teacher educator programs to understand the perspective of multicultural education Zimmerman, L.W. (2006) developing and implementing school policy Ronald, G.Tharp (1994), Global perspective on Importance of multicultural education in higher education Ladson Billings G (1994) etc to mention few, But very few researches have been carried out in Indian context, and present paper is an attempt and an initiative to develop creative and innovative teaching methods, to enhance the teaching - learning process, that will impact our students' thinking and emotions about cultural diversity and help them to become global citizens.

Teachers have a crucial role to play as they are the role models for their students and if they are committed to the process of becoming inter-culturally sensitive and understand the complexity of their students' cultures (Chen, 1997) then they can make a positive impact on the lives of their students.

However it must be noted that this paper is not meant to be prescriptive as situations differ in different settings, and therefore nowhere in this paper is an attempt made to emphasize particularistic solutions to individual problems. Instead some guidelines and approaches are discussed to be viewed more as possible considerations for those interested in these initiatives but only after assessing their appropriateness to local contexts.

OBJECTIVES: Objectives of the present paper are as follows:

- To enable teachers/ students to have access to global knowledge.
- To empower the students to face "today's" challenges & take on the role of responsible and enlightened citizens.
- To teach the teachers /students to be tolerant to diversity in language, religion thought & culture.
- To teach teachers /students to become global citizens.
- To enable teacher/ students to know international education, politics, economic systems, laws & trade.
- To enable teachers/ students to understand and appreciate interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment.
- To help teachers/ students to Practice mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own.
- To learn to Understand that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing.
- To enable them to Build alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.
- To teach students how to respect ethnic and cultural differences and to accept them as part of the cultural richness of life in our modern world.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND

CURRICULUM: The curriculum is the means by which learning outcomes are achieved. Multicultural education is not to be taught as a separate subject instead it has to be infused in the curriculum.

As a part of the school partnerships and student – teachers exchange programmes taking place, a Vadodara city based CBSE affiliated school in Gujarat-India, along with their partner school named- Earnsford grange school, Coventry-Uk and Dumbarton academy –Scotland, had various

collaborative projects and activities planned with international perspective. Teachers from pre-primary, Math, Science, English, Social Science, Computer, Music-dance and Art department were involved. Students from pre-primary, I-XI std were also involved in the projects. The detailed yearlong action plan drawn advocates a firm and true commitment to multiculturalism and is an initiative to develop creative and innovative teaching methods to enhance teaching-learning process that will impact students' thinking and emotions about cultural diversity and help them to become global citizens.

ACTION PLAN: Following are the projects carried out within the curriculum:

PROJECT-1	TITLE: Migratory birds and Cuisines of countries they travel through.
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring and comparing how the weather of certain countries helps migratory birds to survive their course of travel. Making a booklet that will show the maps of the different paths of the world that the Migratory birds take. As a result to link it with weather, environment and awareness of the countries, also include details on these aspects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cross curricular project with food-tech, to learn to make the cuisines of the countries that the migratory birds cross through during their flight.
PROJECT-2	TITLE: Making and distributing Appreciation cards- "HAPPY GRAMS" to the community helpers.
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To research different jobs that provide a smooth running of the day to day life and as a token of appreciation towards the community members, making of 'Happy Grams'(postcards or letters written to thank people about how much they are appreciated) and distribute them to the community helpers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing letters to their pen pals and share their experiences and responses from their community members. This project is a lead to involve parents, siblings and wider community.
PROJECT-3	TITLE: Designing a board game
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To research on topics like physical features in UK and India, Currency used in their countries, festivals celebrated and the food eaten during festival time. The findings were shared through emails with the counterparts in the two countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A board game, designed by both the schools, quizzing them about the various aspects mentioned above. The e-copy of the game to be sent to the partner country.
PROJECT-4	TITLE: Participation in Big Dance schools
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students with the help of teachers learn the choreography and take part in a world record attempt for the 'Largest Dance Routine - Multivenu' at 1pm (GMT). Students will undertake to do an additional 20 minutes of dance a day during Big Dance week scheduled in month of July. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students with the help of teachers will go to the Municipality school and teach the children steps of 'The Big dance'.
PROJECT-5	TITLE: Digital Photo stories on folk tales of various countries.
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be aware of the history behind folk tales and how it influences our culture, by teaching / learning various folk tales. An opportunity, to compare and contrast different customs and cultures of the countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enacting the stories and videos by exchanging with the partner School. One group (Students of Class V) will make small movies on the folk tales with the help of computer teacher.

PROJECT-6	TITLE: Sustainable development of forests and crops.
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To investigate the central role forests have played in past and present, in their lives and human dependence on them and their products. To investigate the conflicts in both countries that has arisen from developing forest areas. To investigate and compare the level of sustainability of forests, looking at vegetation, wildlife and commercial use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing a Calendar on endangered animals, Class magazine of poems, caricatures and Newspaper articles based on the theme forests, wild life etc.
PROJECT-7	TITLE: Garment design: A fusion of India, UK, Africa, U.A.E dressing styles.
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher/ Students research on the history of the garments worn in the different countries and how garments are influenced by weather. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing costumes which are a fusion of two countries and organize a fashion show.
PROJECT-8	TITLE: Marking important festivals of neighboring countries of India namely: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka on the calendar.
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding the festivals of the different countries and to try to correlate the days with the Indian sub-continent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marking these including the major holidays in the various countries on the calendar.
PROJECT-9	TITLE: Treasure hunting the puzzling puzzles.
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students under the guidance of teacher working in groups will find out the origin of puzzles like kenken, Sudoku, kakaru, Rubic Cube, Tower of Hanoi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The groups will then collect many puzzles of kenken, Sudoku, kakaru and present in form of booklets. Booklets. Other group of students will make a model of tower of Hanoi and will design creative puzzles with the rubric cube.
PROJECT-10	TITLE: Child Rights and their Plight.
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Along with the teacher one group will list the UN Convention on child Rights, Second group will investigate the work of different NGO's like CRY, Chidline Foundation, Save the child and Another group will decide on one area of the child rights getting exploited and will start a campaign like 'save the girl child' or 'A life free from Hunger'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They will present their findings in form of PPTs or booklets to the other groups.
PROJECT-11	TITLE: Studying different types of economies.
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students under the guidance of the teacher will collect information about population, GDP, rate of inflation of different countries and will make a comparative study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They will display and explain about the different currencies.
PROJECT-12	TITLE: Learning foreign currencies
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will learn about different countries and their currencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They will display and explain about the different currencies.
PROJECT-13	TITLE: Festivals of Dolls
ACTIVITY-1	ACTIVITY-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be told about the doll festival in India and Japan by the teachers. They will be shown pictures of the same by the teachers. Students will then do coloring activity, design dresses for the dolls and make paper dolls in craft. With the help of parents, teachers dolls will be made of various designs and an exhibition will be organized where students will talk on the dolls and the festival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They will display and explain about the different currencies.

Documentation & Evaluation Methods:

- Comments, Responses, Reviews by link School
- Quiz, Worksheets, Puzzles, Coloring activity sheets, Paper dolls
- Feedback from community Workers, Visitors, Parents, Students
- Photographs, Portfolios ,Videos, Movies of the folk-tales, Power point Presentations, Blog, Media coverage- in Newsletter and magazine, Project file

- Brochures on Child rights, different world NGOs', Article in School News letter
- Peer assessment & Teacher assessment
- Exhibition

Learning Outcomes:

- Development of research skills, social skills,
- Development of skills for working collaboratively in a team
- Development of ICT skills for international communication/ collaboration
- Learning the diversity in food habits across the globe.
- Knowing more about the Migratory birds, Adaptability of animals to their habitat
- Awareness about various jobs that people do in the local community and in Coventry.
- Development of sensitivity to all economic classes of the society.
- Learning to Appreciate and value diversity of cultures.
- Development of advocacy skills for making their voices heard for a just cause.
- Development of inclusive approach.
- Development of sensitivity to social issues.
- Development of abilities to use tools of peaceful conflict resolution through dance.
- Learning and understanding, the contribution of different cultures to the progress of mankind.
- Developing an ability to comprehend and enact, to learn to tolerate & accept, to work in team.
- Understanding of global issues pertaining to sustainable development.
- Understanding social impact on celebrations of festivals.
- Understanding the origin of mathematical puzzles as linked to the historical period.
- Learning to do Comparative & Statistical analysis, thinking critically.
- Learning the location of countries & Understanding the differences between the currencies.
- Improving Fine motor skills and communication skill.

Conclusion: We have found that an active experience enhances the quality of the discourse in ourselves and in classes. Reading, writing, and talking about cultural diversity is not enough. We must challenge ourselves to create innovative teaching- learning methods within the constraints of our teacher education programs if we are to prepare the types of teachers that our schools need and the taught who ultimately benefits.

Personal change and growth cannot be observed easily and explicitly. However, interschool teacher-student exchange & interactions along with the documentations & evaluation methods used in the project study, showed how their experiences allow to construct and develop a global mind and it indeed did significantly affect the personal growth of teacher and the taught, as well as enhance their intercultural and global understanding.

As to the weaknesses of this project study, the researchers acknowledge that an exploratory study project like this is limited to formulating hypotheses and offering thematic insights as if from a bird's eye view, instead of reaching more in-depth research claims and explanations. Also, the fact that all the documentation & evaluation methods done can be seen as a limitation when seeking rich numerical, statistical description and estimations trying to tap the deeper meanings of the participant's experiences.

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