COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN ECOLOGY/A, SOPHIE ROGERS SCHOOL FOR EARLY LEARNING

Unleashing The Real Power of Diversity

Whytnie Strain, B.S., Jamel David, M.Ed.L. & Michele Quinn, B.A. - Preschool Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Diversity, equity, and inclusion has become a major area of interest in schools nationwide. Due to blatand discrimination that has taken place in our country which has changed our social climate, many people are realizing that diversity, equity, and inclusion are extremely important factors in fostering growth in our society. Individuals are becoming aware of their own blases and taking action. One course of action is making sure DEI is enforced in workplaces and schools through representation, acknowledging and celebrating cultural differences, and establishing a sense of belonging for marginalized populations.

REPRESENTATION IN THE CLASSROOM

Representation is extremely important regarding DEI. It is important for children to see themselves represented in the books that they read, the toys they play with, and through the activities they engage in throughout their learning experience. According to a study completed about diversity in the classroom, "diversity may contribute significantly to students improvement on key learning outcomes that are associated with both academic development and critical sibilities needed to work in diverse settings-skills that will be increasingly important in the 21st century." (Huridao, 2001)



scenarios that they see in their daily lives, such as mealtimes in their homes



Over the course of working with this student, she was able to write the letters in her come.

BENEFITS OF OWN-RACE TEACHERS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Research has shown that students with classroom teachers that have the same race and gender show significant growth in reading and math skills. Having teachers of the same race and gender as students, not only supports academic success, but it also fosters a sense of belonging for students. When teachers share the same race-dethinicity with their students, they are able to serve as role models, mentors, advocates, and even cultural translators to their students, (Egailte, 2015).

There is a diverse team of teachers in the classroom: students of African American descent have teachers who they can identify with and share similar cultural experiences, making it easier to establish positive connections. Teachers make it a point to highlight and celebrate cultural differences amongst all students, such as practices done at home and certain traditions that students have with their families. It is also important for teachers to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy into the curriculum. Some examples of this are, exploring different languages that children speak at home such as Mandarin and Hebrew, listening to the children's ideas and tailoring curriculum to their interests, and engaging children in activities that allow them to learn about their own culture as well as the culture of others. All of these things foster a sense of belonging for children and create room for building a rich classroom community.

DELIN THE CLASSROOM

When working towards building a positive culturally relevant classroom community, it is critical for teachers to not only encourage children to listen to one another, but that they, themselves, seek to engage in active-listening practices. This is one of the ways in which teachers support children to find their own voice and understand that they matter as an individual and as a member of a group.

Rich, daily conversations with the children are tremendously useful in gleaning information about children, their needs, feelings and a multitude of observations into the internal child. A case in point a child wanted to know if the class would be able to have "babies" on their cots during rest time. The conclusion from that conversation was that the child felt that it wouldn't be fair to do, if all the children in the class couldn't have one. This is evidence of a child who has grown to demonstrate empathy towards her classmates.

A dyeing method was used for muslin dolls where children were free to designate whatever exist nones they wished for the dolls: this was coupled with literature and discussions about skin clotor, comparing families, discussing that differences were to be expected and how we all have our own unique skin, with marks, scars, and color. By attempting to look at learning from the children's perspective, the activity also afforded the children the same opportunity to look through the lenses of each other's cultural identity in regard to family and race (flinks, et al).



tudents used a dying method which included using sea to dye mustin dots to whatever coorthey desired. Teacher Michele Culinn aided the children in this process while discussing different skin tones and how they make us unique and beautiful.



Students learned about Rosa Parks and her bravery during a moth demonstration involving counting septs on a busiled by teacher Whytnie Strain.

A SENSE OF BELONGING

The question of what "belonging" means in American society is approaching the workplace but most importantly in schools. Against this backdrop, school leaders, educators, staff and students demand action against social injustice and movement toward more-equitable schools/classrooms.

In schools where bonding is prioritized, research shows a reduction in discipline citations, better student-beacher relationships, and lower-levels of fear and anxiety related to negative stereotypes (Goyer et al., 2019). It is important that education in the classroom are given thin to build relationships and share successes, as well as challenges in order to feel safe in the building. The greater the connection among teachers, students and administration, the greater the approach of social bonding within the school environment.

The principles of inclusion promote equity, access, opportunity and the rights of children and students with disabilities in education and contribute to reducing discrimination. For many years, children with special needs are either sent to their own schools or left out of education altogether. The teachers take advantage of inclusion by celebrating differences amongst all children, allowing them to feel as though they belong.

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