

FACULTY AWARENESS ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF LEARNERS: EXPLORATIVE CONTEXT IN CHILD EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

I decided to gather research data at Tibongbong Elementary School in Matanao, Davao del Sur because elementary schools has called for developmentally appropriate practices to meet the needs of their students. For this study, ten (10) teachers across content areas and grade levels who could serve as study participants participated. Teachers' experiences of awareness in learners' diversity in the classroom are grouped into: awareness of diversity in terms of curriculum and instruction; awareness of diversity in terms of professional development; awareness of diversity in terms of school policies; get to know your students; maintain consistent communication; acknowledge and respect every student; practice cultural sensitivity; incorporate diversity in the lesson plan; and give students freedom and flexibility. No two students are the same, even if they share a lot in common. To foster diversity awareness, a teachers need to consider all the different aspects of culture that can influence the learners' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Common differences include race, ethnicity, religion, language, economic situation, LGBTQA, student background, cognitive attitude, level of motivation, and diversity of opinion. These courses of actions may be categorized into four broad bands of strategies that will enhance teachers awareness of diversity which include: demonstration of high expectations, implementation of culturally relevant instruction, cooperative learning, capitalize on the funds of knowledge in families and the community, instructional conversations, cognitive guided instruction, technology-enriched instruction, establishment of caring relationships, effective parent and community involvement, distribution of cognitive authority, listening and adapting of critical reflection, and faculty vulnerability.

Keywords: Awareness of diversity, experiences, manifested diversities, enhancement

1. INTRODUCTION

The tremendous diversity of cultural, ethnic, religious and socioeconomic groups in school today calls for multicultural education programs that reflect understanding and respect for children's and adolescents' differences. Cultural differences in respect of authority, academic and social values, self-regulation and peer regulation behaviors and teachers' classroom management are the factors for their perception of the school environment (Chunyang, 2013). It is very important that teachers must look and reflect also into the multicultural awareness so that individuals can effectively deliver instructions about other culture and folks can realize that there is unity amidst diversity.

In the same manner, students in the same school with different religion should respect one another. Of primary concern is the fact that the rapid change of ethnic composition is placing additional demands on teachers who need to foster a multicultural environment into a classroom (Baeten, 2013). For such a challenging enterprise, a teacher has to promote changes in the academic curriculum, in the learning environment and also in the approach of the teachers toward the students. Children coming from different cultures have different understanding levels and hence require for different teaching methods. It is the teacher's primary duty to cultivate an environment which aims at bridging cultural gaps. Teachers should understand the role culture plays in the classroom and employ teaching practices that accommodate students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Young & Sawyer, 2018). In short, classroom teachers to be effective must possess cultural diversity awareness and sensitivity (Gay, 2000; Banks, 2001).

Because of this, the increasing diversity within Philippine schools provides both opportunities and challenges. Diverse classrooms and schools make it possible to teach students from many different cultures and grow how to live together cooperatively and productively. Teachers need to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to maximize the opportunities that diversity offers and to minimize its challenges. Teacher education programs should help teachers attain the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to work effectively with students from diverse groups as well as help students from mainstream groups develop cross-cultural knowledge, values, and competencies.

However, high quality educational experiences do not exist if some ethnic groups and their contributions to the development of history, life and culture are ignored or demeaned (Gay, 2005). So, the mission of education today is to promote life in its wholeness, to bring into communion and solidarity in the light of authentic globalization the finest expressions of diverse cultures, expressions of human dignity through creativity in work. Courses and programs are judged of quality and of excellence when they could be 'inter-nationally competitive'. Each country having also to contend with variations of major cultures and with the reality of globalization, Ramirez (2006) suggested several postulates with regard to 'cultural diversity and education in an increasingly globalized world.

Furthermore, distinctions between public and private schooling are becoming blurred, shifting schools in many areas toward corporate control and away from democratic community participation (Lipman, Haues, 2008). Many advocates of multicultural education quickly found attention to diversity and equity being replaced by attention to standards and student test scores, particularly in schools in which multicultural education had been seen as having to do mainly with getting along rather than improving academic teaching and learning (Sleeter, 2007).

Diversity is generally understood to encompass race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, and political and religious beliefs. And while in the past it has focused on strengthening inter-cultural tolerance, new ideas about diversity and inclusion have developed, shifting the focus towards enriching human learning and experience, so-called ‘unity in diversity.’

When it comes to education, ‘unity in diversity’ in the classroom does not seem a farfetched idea anymore for any globally minded teacher. This can be accomplished by either having technology that connects students with foreign knowledge and cultures or by having an international student body to make the learning environment multicultural and diverse.

Moreover, teachers align their teaching styles to the needs and learning styles of their students. This means that teachers must consider each student diversity individually. The researcher selected 10 teachers of Tibongbong Elementary School of Matanao, Davao del Sur for this study viewed as qualitative with interviews as the main data for collection.

This study determined the awareness on cultural diversity of learners among teachers of Tibongbong Elementary School of Matanao. Davao del Sur. With the advent of the K to 12 curriculum, diversity of students have also become the concern of teachers especially in the basic education, the starting point of learners education.

There is a growing interest in teachers’ beliefs about diverse learners. Perhaps corresponding with a rising acknowledgement of classroom diversity, researchers are starting to explore the relationships between teacher beliefs about their students and their subsequent classroom practices. As previously noted by Fives and Buehl (2012), the beliefs teachers hold about their students’ ability to learn and engage with the curriculum help to filter, frame, and guide teachers’ planning and teachers to proactively acknowledge, diagnose, and address individual learner needs. This section looks at three primary fields of teacher belief research towards classroom diversity, including cultural diversity, English Language Learners (ELLs), and inclusion of students with disabilities (SWDs).

To begin, while the amount of teacher belief research investigating diversity topics has increased since the 1990s, Gay (2015) noticed certain perspectives on diversity are still largely absent from the literature, including the voices of practicing teachers. I have argued the absence of these voices from cultural diversity research could possibly lead to oversimplified, misleading, or inaccurate conclusions on the importance of addressing diversity issues in the classroom. Yet a search of the available literature revealed some inconsistencies about teachers’ beliefs and cultural diversity. In the next section, I share studies that explored three of these inconsistencies.

First, while teachers may believe the best way to deal with cultural, ethnic, or racial diversity is to ignore it, Tyler et al. (2006) suggested teachers respond differently to culturally themed behaviors like eye contact, personal space, or family expectations. In a quantitative study of 62 elementary school teachers, Tyler et al. concluded that teachers and students expressed definite cultural preferences for teaching and learning. These cultural preferences manifested themselves in lower rates of achievement for minority students taught by majority teachers, which suggest that the values teachers place on learning outcomes should not be considered culturally context free.

Second, teachers’ fear of making mistakes with diversity issues has led them to adopt context neutral beliefs in the classroom. McIntyre (1997) suggested teachers worried about insulting diverse students and being labeled racists. In this study, McIntyre examined a group of 13 middle and upper middle class female teachers to create “white talk,” a construct to explain the strategies majority white teachers minimize their individual and collective responsibilities for addressing racial and cultural issues in the classroom. McIntyre explained these talk strategies included “derailing the conversation, evading questions, dismissing counterarguments, withdrawing from the discussion, remaining silent, interrupting speakers and topics, and colluding with each other to create a ‘culture of niceness.’” In other words, these strategies revealed how majority white culture insulates itself from cultural diversity issues.

Causey et al. (2000) noted a third area of incongruence with teacher candidates’ long-term belief change as instructional leaders teaching diverse students. Participants in this case study kept autobiographical narratives, diversity plans, reflection journals, and post-experience essays. A longitudinal component to the study reviewed these artifacts three years after the study and found most teachers had returned to their prior diversity beliefs. Researchers acknowledged the difficulty of changing longstanding beliefs with only one intervention. Instead, Causey et al. recommended programs pay ongoing attention to classroom diversity issues to provide the best chance for teachers to use more culturally differentiated practices.

Teacher candidates' expressed egalitarian beliefs which supposedly promote cultural diversity (by treating all students equally) sound admirable in practice. But, as noted by Causey et al. (2000), if these beliefs proved enduring, they could lead practicing teachers to "deny the privileges they may enjoy because of their skin color and social class, and to discount or minimize the effects of past and present discrimination" in schools and society. In other words, the egalitarian viewpoint's ability to overlook cultural diversity issues comes from a position of privilege rather than equity. The upshot is seemingly beneficial beliefs can hinder acknowledgement of classroom diversity realities.

A second way that diversity manifests itself in the classroom is through the growth of English Language Learners (ELL) in the classroom. In their nationwide study of ELL programs, Calderón, Slavin, and Sánchez (2011) noted the wide disparities of learning outcomes between ELL students and English-proficient students. If teacher beliefs influence their judgements of their students' ability to learn, students operating outside of mainstream linguistic norms could negatively influence these beliefs, particularly in the area of teacher expectations.

Why do teacher expectations matter with ELL students? Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) Pygmalion experiment demonstrated when teachers expected their students to achieve at a high level, the students did so. This phenomenon became known as the self-fulfilling prophecy effect. More recently, Rubie-Davies (2010) examined the relationship between teacher expectations and student achievement and also concluded teacher expectations are important to student learning. It would seem differing teacher beliefs and attributes can contribute to a range of instructional and socio-emotional climates in the classroom. It is safe to say that teacher expectations hold significant influence over student learning outcomes.

A third area of teacher belief research towards diverse students involves populations with special needs or disabilities (SWDs). These students may have special academic, social, emotional, physical, or sensory needs. As a result of the inclusion movement, the majority of SWDs now spend their days in general education classrooms (Osgood, 2005). Inclusion is generally defined as providing SWDs placement in general education classrooms and access to general education curricula, as opposed to the older term mainstreaming, which does not imply the same level of curricular access (Kiely, Brownell, Lauterbach, & Benedict, 2015).

Classrooms are becoming more diverse every year which means cultural diversity in the classroom is becoming an increasingly important issue for educators throughout the education system. Ignoring the increase in diversity is not a helpful response. Instead, educators are embracing diversity and fostering culturally inclusive classrooms designed to help every student succeed. You can do the same with your classroom.

What is culture? Culture is a lot more than a list of holidays or food preferences or the language someone speaks. Culture is the framework around which we build our identity. It influences how we engage with the world, the perspectives we take, and the expectations we have. Every one of us has a culture, and most of us have identities built from multiple cultures. For example, we may consider ourselves part of the Filipino culture, the culture of Mindanao, the culture of children born to Cebuano immigrants in Luzon, the culture of people who enjoy comic books, etc.

When discussing diversity in the classroom, we tend to look at cultural differences that have been historically ignored or marginalized. Your goal as an educator is to ensure you don't neglect a major aspect of a student's identity, and that you foster an environment where differences are accepted and understood, particularly if those differences have historically been ignored or disparaged.

Kinds of diversity common in classrooms

No two students are the same, even if they share a lot in common. To foster cultural awareness, a teachers need to consider all the different aspects of culture that can influence the learners' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Common cultural differences include:

Race. It's important to recognize the impact skin color has had on the broader American culture and how it can affect students' perceptions of each other and themselves.

Ethnicity. While ethnicity is sometimes used as a synonym for race, it is more accurately defined as the culture we derive from our nationality. Ethnic differences appear in all immigrant groups and can persist for generations. Understanding these differences can help you be attuned to your students' interests and outlooks.

Religion. While you know that not everyone worships in the same way—and that some don't worship at all—it's good to familiarize yourself with the ways religious traditions and requirements can impact your students' behaviors and free time. **Language.** Language barriers should not be educational barriers. While you can't be expected to speak every language, you can be expected to make accommodations for those who speak English as a second language.

Economic. The economic situation of a student's family can greatly impact his or her learning. You should be aware of how economic pressures can lead to classroom stress as well as to issues with finding time and a place to study.

LGBTQ. A student's sexual orientation and/or gender identity can become a point of conflict in their lives. It shouldn't also be a point of conflict in the classroom.

Fostering cultural awareness and sensitivity. Express interest in diversity. You can go a long way toward fostering a culturally inclusive classroom by demonstrating your own desire to be culturally aware. Ask students to share their stories and relate their cultural experiences to the lessons you're teaching.

Remain sensitive to differences. Some students will be more forthcoming about their cultural differences than others. Before assuming a student is lazy or lacking ability, consider what cultural differences might be influencing a student's study habits and learning—and how you can adjust your methods and/or provide accommodations.

Maintain high expectations for all students. Cultural diversity does not require you to have diverse expectations. You should maintain the same high expectations for all students. Yes, you may choose to make special accommodations for those students who need them, but you want all students to excel. Maintaining different expectations for different students can wrongly teach students that cultural differences determine educational abilities.

Teach a culturally inclusive curriculum. In the past, education has tended to focus heavily on Western European history and culture and on the stories of global people, particularly men. You should make a concerted effort to teach a broad curriculum that more accurately captures the world in its whole. By doing so, you can help ensure students don't feel as if their culture is unimportant or that their own contributions aren't wanted.

Diversity Pedagogy Theory (DPT) is a set of principles that point out the natural and inseparable connection between culture and cognition (Sheets, 2005). In other words, to be effective as a teacher, you must understand and acknowledge the critical role culture plays in the teaching-learning process.

DPT maintains that culturally inclusive teachers (a) observe children's cultural behavioral patterns to identify individual and group cultural competencies and skills; and (b) use this knowledge to guide their teaching decisions. Culturally competent teachers facilitate learning. They understand how to change and adapt instruction. These teachers create optimal learning conditions which enable more children to learn what they intend to teach.

DPT links culture, cognition, and schooling in a single unit. It unites classroom practice with deep understandings of the role culture plays in the social and cognitive development of children (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Cole, 1996; Greenfield & Cocking, 1994; Hollins, 1996; Lave, 1988; Portes, 1996; Rogoff, 1990, 2003; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). DPT views the natural connectedness of culture and cognition as key to incorporating multiple factors of diversity in the teaching-learning process. It acknowledges the indissoluble, joint-role of culture and cognition in the human developmental process.

Diversity pedagogy clearly recognizes the powerful, active role students play in their learning. In other words, teachers are extremely important; but students can easily and consistently choose to sabotage, ignore, dismiss, or minimize their significance. Unfortunately, sometimes unwillingness to comply to teacher directives—student resistance—can place students at risk.

Children are always learning. It is their nature to actively learn in and out of the classroom. It is to your benefit to acquire the pedagogical skills you need to teach children what you want them to learn. You must concede that if the children are not learning in your classroom, you are not teaching, even when you think you are.

Non-teaching is especially obvious in classrooms where teachers have no control of misbehaving students. However, lack of learning may also be taking place when students appear to be engaged or seem to comply with classroom behavioral standards. Quiet, orderly classrooms do not automatically mean that students in those settings are learning. DPT will help you better teach what you want your students to learn and to teach well more consistently.

2. METHODS

Due to the contextual nature of this phenomenon, I used a qualitative study approach. Qualitative of the phenomenological kind of studies are empirical designs that investigate a phenomenon in its natural context (Yin, 2003). Moreover, phenomenology study design is especially useful when the boundaries of participants are not easily distinguished from the natural context. This qualitative study incorporated a multiple study design with a holistic analysis (Stake, 1995). In other words, I selected this design to emphasize the participants' perspectives in the natural setting of their school environments. These natural settings included the participants' classrooms, planning periods, and faculty lunchtimes in order to gain a richer understanding of the contexts in which the participants worked.

For this study, ten (10) teachers across content areas and grade levels who could serve as study participants. The principal, who assisted me in the selection, based her selection on teachers whom she considered skilled teaching diverse students in their classrooms. Using multiple participants allowed for a level of comparison enabling me to establish emerging patterns, trends, or outliers. Of the ten teachers the principal recommended, all agreed to participate in this study.

The first data collection instrument consisted of teacher interviews. According to Seidman (2013), the purpose of interviewing is not to test a hypothesis, but to express an interest in “the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience.” I scheduled two interviews with each teacher participant at the beginning and end points of the observation period. These interviews were using predominantly open-ended questions to allow participants the freedom to discuss their beliefs at length. I employed a semi-structured approach to gain what Thomas (2011) called “the best of both worlds,” which is a compromise between the efficiency of a structured interview and the rich conversational potential of an unstructured interview. To ensure a reasonable time commitment for the participants, interviews were scheduled for approximately 30-45 minutes each. Brief follow-up conversations were needed to occur after interviews for clarification. The first set of semi-structured interview questions consisted of items adapted from the review of literature. These were aligned with Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory and widely used to measure teacher efficacy and teacher beliefs.

According to Goetz and LeCompte (1984) data collection and analysis is a simultaneous process that distinguishes qualitative designs from more positivistic research. This means the data I collect and the avenues of analysis that I chose to employ largely determined the final product of my case study. While analysis also occurred in tandem with data collection, a more thorough analysis took place after all data are collected. Further, data analysis is a highly iterative “complex process that involves moving back and forth” between concrete data and abstract concepts, inductive and deductive logic, or descriptive and interpretive elements (Merriam, 1998). In other words, the process of attaching meaning to collected bits of data involves a certain level of researcher intuition. These definitions are useful to understanding the process of data analysis used in this study.

Attride-Stirling (2001) provided six analytic steps for using thematic networks analysis. Step one involves devising a coding framework based on the number of theoretical interests (i.e., Bandura’s triadic reciprocal determinism) and using the coding framework to dissect the text into pieces. In step two, researchers identify the themes from the text segments and further refine these themes into specific and broad categories.

These themes must be specific enough to “pertain to one idea,” yet also be “broad enough to find incarnations in various different text segments.” (Attride-Stirling, 2001) Step three involves creating the networks based in the identified themes. Fourth, researchers take each network and describe its contents and support the description with selected text segments. During this process of description, the researchers explore and note patterns they detect. Once the thematic network has been fully described and explored, researchers present a summary of main themes and characterizing patterns.

3. RESULTS

Teachers’ experiences of awareness in learners’ diversity
in school or in the classroom

Teachers’ experiences of awareness in learners’ diversity in the classroom are grouped into: awareness of diversity in terms of curriculum and instruction; awareness of diversity in terms of professional development; awareness of diversity in terms of school policies; get to know your students; maintain consistent communication; acknowledge and respect every student; practice cultural sensitivity; incorporate diversity in the lesson plan; and give students freedom and flexibility.

Diversities manifested by learners in the classroom

No two students are the same, even if they share a lot in common. To foster diversity awareness, a teachers need to consider all the different aspects of culture that can influence the learners’ perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Common differences include race, ethnicity, religion, language, economic situation, LBTQA, student background, cognitive attitude, level of motivation, and diversity of opinion.

Proposed course of action to enhance awareness among
teachers on diversity of learners

These courses of actions may be categorized into broad bands of proposals that include: demonstration of high expectations, implementation of culturally relevant instruction, cooperative learning, capitalize on the funds of knowledge in families and the community, instructional conversations, cognitive guided instruction, technology-enriched instruction, establishment of caring relationships, effective parent and community involvement, distribution of cognitive authority, listening and adapting of critical reflection, and faculty vulnerability.

4. DISCUSSION

There are several ways teachers and administrators have ensured that both the classroom environment and curriculum are responsive to the increasing cultural diversity of our society. These strategies encouraged all students’ cultural awareness, enhancing each student’s sense of identity, and foster inclusion in the classroom community.

Awareness of diversity in terms of curriculum and instruction. Educating all students is successful when diversity or differences of students is meaningfully considered and embraced. Culturally relevant instruction and assessment practices ensure greater success and engagement with students from various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Awareness of diversity in terms of professional development. Professional development is a major strategy for building cultural competencies, which continually reassesses relationships between teachers and learners, and attitudes and beliefs about language, culture, and race.

Awareness of diversity in terms of school policies. School policies need to change to reflect national, regional and local diversity. This is supported by multicultural education movement that has demanded schools to become culturally competent so that all students have an opportunity to succeed. It has become a dynamic field developing with the purpose of providing all students with equal education and to eliminate the achievement gap between majority students and youth from culturally diverse communities.

Expectations are internal processes that arise from our belief systems and values. The research on working with diverse students cites low teacher expectations as a major contributor to the achievement gap. Educators must be willing to explore our beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions that lead to low expectations and accept responsibility for the influence they have on student learning.

Research has consistently endorsed the use of structured cooperative learning as a major strategy for teaching in diverse learning environments. Cooperative learning provides learners with essential opportunities to use language in meaningful, purposeful, and interesting ways, build self-esteem and self-confidence, and develop academic, communication, and social skills.

School practices often underestimate and disregard what students are able to demonstrate intellectually in schools by not recognizing and mobilizing students' funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge refer to the practical and intellectual knowledge and skills found in students' homes and communities. When this knowledge is untapped and used to plan and deliver instruction, it becomes a social and intellectual resource for teachers.

Caring relationships between teachers and students are not a frill, but integral to academic success. In effective classrooms the strengths of every student are recognized, respected, and valued as students and teachers share the roles of expert, researcher, teacher, and learner.

Parent and community involvement in schools has long been linked as having a positive effect on student achievement. Recent studies indicate that effective home-school partnerships increase grades, test scores, attendance, graduation rates, post-secondary enrollments, and homework completion.

According to some teachers, meanings are acquired in childhood...often in the context of an emotionally charged relationship with parents, teachers, or other mentors. The more intense the emotional context of learning and the more it is reinforced, the more deeply embedded and intractable to change are the habits of expectation that constitute the students' meaning.

The teachers think critically about their beliefs and roles as instructors and provided them with a safe environment in which they could challenge those beliefs and make decisions about how to make any necessary changes.

5. CONCLUSIONS

It is impossible to prepare for a career in education and ignore student diversity. Students differ from one another in a plethora of ways, including, but not limited to, ethnicity, culture, social class, intelligence, learning style, and home language. Throughout our discussions of student diversity, it becomes apparent that in order to have a successful classroom, a teacher must view diversity as an opportunity and not a hindrance.

First and foremost, teachers should be aware of their actions and make sure that they are in no way promoting prejudice or discrimination in the classroom. This need was evident from the narrative of one participant, in which she intentionally viewed people with a certain clothing or apparel as superior. By doing this, she not only led to the devaluation of those with the inferior clothing or apparel, but also encouraged her students to pursue those stereotypes. Those with the superior clothing bullied the others, and adapted the teacher's views of their inferiority. By promoting an environment of equal respect for all children and putting an immediate stop to prejudice and discrimination, a classroom can transform into a community of equality.

In class, we also discussed how socio-economic status is perhaps the biggest determinant of student achievement in the classroom. As an educator, it is necessary to recognize the backgrounds from which your students come, and how these factors will affect students' learning. These effects are especially prevalent in students from working-class and lower-class backgrounds. Frequently, students from these backgrounds enter school without the fundamental skills already obtained by their middle-class peers. These tasks include naming letters, counting, and reading. Parents from

these homes are also less likely to be involved in their child's schooling. In teaching students from these backgrounds, it becomes necessary to recognize that they are probably not as advanced as their middle-class peers and that you may need to teach them fundamentals that are usually learned in the home. Also, children from these families are likely to have less support at home, so a teacher must provide added support in the school environment, as well as try to recruit the parents to be more involved in their child's education.

Another learning that is especially important when dealing with diverse students is the role of stereotypes in learning about the children in your classroom. While stereotypes are sometimes inaccurate and commonly viewed as negative, they can provide a solid starting point for getting to know your students. Stereotypes can be positive and beneficial in the sense that they provide a foundation upon which you can build with your students. For example, if you have a student that consistently wears slippers to school, a logical starting point in getting to know him would be slippers. However, stereotypes can be abused when you continue to stick to them beyond initial interactions with students. For example, if you were to learn that the mentioned student have no choice but to wear slippers, it would be inconsiderate to continue to pursue the subject. Stereotypes can be beneficial only as they are used as a starting point, and not a continual classification for a student.

A final idea that is especially important in a diverse classroom concerns ethnicity. Because a teacher is more than likely to have students from different racial groups, it is necessary to highlight them all equally. One way this can be done is through the curriculum used. Books should contain pictures of children of all races in equal proportions, use names from all different ethnicities, and have examples including the behaviors and practices of different cultures. For example, we should move away from using names such as "Jack" or "Sally," and include others such as "Pablo" or "Tyrell." By doing this, we send the message that we care about our students and where they come from, and promote this attitude among our class.

While there is no end to the examples of how diversity can affect a classroom, I believe that the mentioned ideas are some of the most important for teachers in diverse classrooms to be aware of. By adopting these ideas, we can view diversity not as a hindrance, but as an opportunity to increase awareness of and respect for people who are different than us. In this way, we can usher our students into an era of decreased prejudice, discrimination, and negative stereotypes.

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