

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

TPEP Alignment:

Criterion 5: Fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment that takes into account: Physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being of students.

Topic Definition:

The Glossary of Education Reform defines multicultural education as “any form of education or teaching that incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds” (Sabbott, 2013, para. 1). Multicultural education serves many purposes, but the most relevant of which for this project are reduction of prejudice and promotion of equity.

Colorblind racism is a type of racism that presents itself in a unique way. It’s the idea that you don’t see color; you treat everybody exactly the same regardless of their race. This is problematic because “...there can be injustice in treating people the same when in relevant respects they are different, just as much as there can be in treating them differently when in relevant respects they are the same” (Heybach et al., 2020, p. 153). Colorblindness as an ideology minimizes the effects of racism and fails to acknowledge systematic issues, thus halting the progression of social justice.

My goal with this project is to call for the proper implementation of multicultural education specifically in rural areas, which I believe to need it the most. Furthermore, part of implementing multicultural education means the abolishment of colorblindness as an ideology in rural classrooms.

FRAMES FOR COLORBLINDNESS

- Abstract liberalism
 - “I had to work hard for my success, everyone has a fair shake! That’s equality!”
- Naturalization
 - “People only engage with likewise people... it’s simply human nature!”
- Cultural racism
 - “The reason minority groups have economic issues is because of their culture of having too many babies!”
- Minimization of racism
 - “Slavery was hundreds of years ago... racism doesn’t affect people in the modern world!”



Asotin, Washington

CONSEQUENCES OF RURALITY

Advantages of rural school districts:

- Smaller class sizes
- Higher student participation in extracurriculars
- Higher student achievement
- Cooperation between schools and communities

Disadvantages of rural school districts:

- Low minority enrollment
- Limited access to technology
- Lack of culturally responsive instruction
- Lack of diversity among students and staff

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Multicultural education has proven to have a plethora of positive effects on students of color. It “...combats deculturalization, reduces prejudice and the effects of stereotypes, enhances other-group orientation, and promotes critical thinking skills and empowerment through the use of critical pedagogy” (Zaldana, 2010, pg. 19). However, since we’re focusing on rural areas that lack racial diversity, how effective is it in helping white students become more culturally sensitive?

Okoye-Johnson found that “[Multicultural education] is effective in bringing about positive racial attitudes in students ages 3 to 8 and 9 to 16. However, [multicultural education] seemed to be much more effective in producing positive racial attitudes among the 9-to 16-year-old students” (Okoye-Johnson, 2011, p. 1265). Okoye-Johnson goes on to suggest that policy makers and practitioners should enforce multicultural education as an integral part of any schools curriculum, and allocate funds specifically for it (Okoye-Johnson, 2011, p. 1266).

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Fred Yeo says that “At its heart, multicultural education is about uprooting the status quo of culturally-based ideologies that sustain social stratification, bigotry, and fear; recognizing the validity of group and individual identity; and disrupting oppressive societal and community traditions” (Yeo, 1999, para.16). Yeo goes on to explain how multicultural education isn’t something that is to be an “add-on to the curriculum restricted to certain days or weeks of the school year” (Yeo, 1999, para. 17), yet that is often the case. We see this during black history month and women’s history month. The concept of multicultural education suggests that it is something to become inherent in all curriculum and isn’t a lesson in and of itself. It is a mindset, a way of thinking, and a way of viewing the world that departs from how curriculum has always been taught.

IMPLEMENTATION IN DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES

- **English Language Arts**
 - Diversify the literature you study
 - Integrate texts that show the perspectives of different cultures
 - Discuss societal challenges
- **History/Social Studies**
 - Discuss how historical events have impacted marginalized groups
 - Think critically about how and why racism still exists and has effects today
- **Mathematics**
 - Consider not relying on Eurocentric strategies
 - Implement the culture of your students in the work they do
- **Sciences**
 - Demonstrate how different cultures use science
 - Highlight achievements from various groups

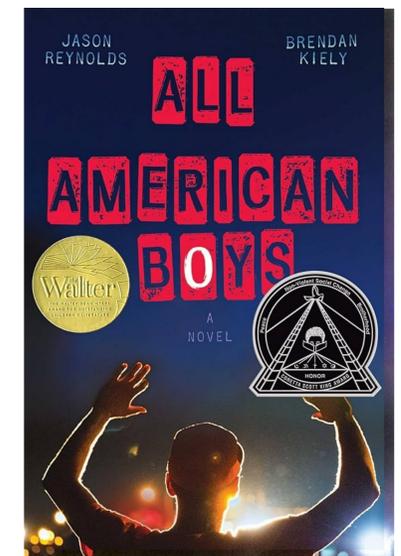


References →



BOOKS FOR A MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

All American boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely is a co-written novel that encompasses a white experience and a black experience of police brutality. Fiction written to show perspectives like these foster empathy and cultural sensitivity because students can relate to the characters in the novel.



Frederick and Porsche Joseph’s *Better than we found it: conversations to help save the world* touches on disinformation, climate change, environmental racism, feminism, the wealth gap, gun violence, practicing anti-racism, education reform, health care reform, the military industrial complex, the prison-industrial complex, ableism, and immigration, each of which in digestible chapters for students.

