

**CHALLENGES FACED BY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN TEACHING****Ramarcha Prasad Pandey, Ph. D.***Principal J.P. College of Education, Rewa (MP)***Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to identify some problems connected with teaching and learning in a multicultural environment at the university level. This paper looks at the challenges facing developing countries to teach. India is a typical example of a developing country. There is stiff competition for amongst different sectors for resource allocations. In most countries, priority for government resources goes to programs such as health care, education, food security defense and infrastructure. Education in most cases takes the bulk of the grant. The aim of this paper is to draw readers' attention especially to some problems revolving around teaching in such an environment. This means that creating new programs in the area of education.

Keywords: *multicultural environment, learning problems, teaching problems.*

Teaching and learning in a multicultural world: a theoretical background:

The way people view the world is determined wholly or partly by the structure of their native language. Following this way of reasoning, it seems obvious that in a situation when two people being users of different native languages meet, their view of the world, patterns of behavior and beliefs differ. Nowadays, in the era of globalization, more and more people move to another country to work or study and different cultures come into contact. Multiculturalism is an entrenched reality at university nowadays. Those who do not love it bear it, and those who accuse it are few. It defines the core of the moral mission of the contemporary university. Students, and also their tutors, seem to encounter problems concerning cultural clashes. Teaching and learning in a multicultural environment has, undoubtedly, advantages and disadvantages. As far as the negative aspect of learning and teaching in a multicultural environment is concerned, there are various problems encountered while two, or more different cultures come into contact. The problems are encountered not only by students, but by tutors and lecturers as well. As far as it concerns the students, and state that students enrolled in courses taught by professors coming from different ethnic or linguistic backgrounds experience discomfort, tension and conflict. It also applies to professors who experience such reservations towards foreigners and may encounter problems while marking them and trying to be honest. There are students who do not appreciate

opportunities created by interaction with culturally diversified people and who have biased opinions of minority professors even before coming into contact with them. Noticed that some students avoid enrolling in particular courses after seeing foreign names of instructors listed in a course schedule. Minority professors are viewed as less competent as the “domestic” ones. This not only limits students’ opportunities to learn through cultural exchange, but it also exerts negative influence on the professors who may not have enough people to teach or whose self-confidence can be lowered because of their thinking that their professional and/or language competence is not enough for their students. There were reporting racial problems in higher education. In end-of-course evaluations domestic professors were rated higher than the minority ones, moreover, some students did not respect and criticized them without any particular reason apart from different linguistic or ethnic background.

Another problem of learning in a multilingual environment is culture shock experienced by some students or lecturers coming to a foreign country. Culture shock can be understood as feelings of discomfort, fear, or insecurity experienced by a person who moves to live in a foreign country. In conclusion, the problems often encountered by teachers and students are: racial problems, culture shock, problems of communication between staff and students because of poor foreign language abilities, the lack of knowledge of different cultures which leads to misunderstandings.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that learning and teaching in a multicultural environment has advantages as well - i.e. it helps to develop students’ intellectual, social, and personal abilities. What is more, cultural diversity at university helps students and professors to retain their own cultural and ethnic identity, take pride in their own cultural heritage, and, at the same time, foster the appreciation of diversity among the whole university community.

Problems of learning in a multicultural environment

Language Problem:

The Problems encountered while learning in a multicultural environment is that some language problems causing breakdowns of communication because the English pronunciation of the Urban professors dramatically different than the pronunciation of rural students of English. The students sometimes do not know what the professor is saying and, because of that, their knowledge of the subject teach by professor is vague at the end of the course.

The problem is the different levels of students’ English language abilities – generally, it is the rule in most of University that students English much better than students from rural. Some students from rural faced serious problems with communication in English during classes. It

was even difficult for them to understand instructions during the assessment time. It restricts their attractiveness for other students as potential team members in group work and, as a result, the groups are more homogenous in national terms than they are planned in order to explore fully the benefits from multicultural work.

Behavioral Problem:

The misunderstandings are the behavior of urban students which is sometimes considered inappropriate by the professor. The students are not impolite, but they ask questions frequently during the class, to add their comments while the professor is talking and to talk to each other aloud during breaks which do not suit the professor. It is also visible that the professor does not like the way urban students, especially female students, dressed. All these facts caused that the students and the professor treat each other with reserve and the atmosphere during class not very good.

The Problem in Teaching Methods:

The teaching methods chose by the professor differed from methods used by lecturer using multimedia while teaching and whose approach is interactive in nature. The professor preferred giving lectures, do not use any equipment and lecturer do not use very recent sources.

The Problem in assessment:

Some students face serious problems with communication in English during classes. It is even difficult for them to understand instructions during the assessment time. It restricts their attractiveness for other students as potential team members in group work and, as a result, the group is more homogenous in national terms than they are plan in order to explore fully the benefits from multicultural work.

The Problem of The uneven treatment:

A problem of the uneven treatment of students from rural and urban this is revealed by comparing exam protocols from lecturers who conduct the same course in English and in other language. The marks in other language is on average much higher and there are even many cases of protocols in which all marks is A. These differences are sometimes the source of dissatisfaction of rural students.

Students not attending the class:

There are even some examples of students which do not attend classes at all and at the end of the semester come to the lecturer and try to persuade him/her to give them positive assessment using some personal arguments. On the other end of the scale of the sense of duty, there are some students who fully adapt to each procedural requirement and they are even

sometimes disappointed if some classes do not comprise all the issues within a given course which are initially planned. These behavioral differences are probably correlated with variation of English language abilities; however it is reasonable to treat them also as culturally biased.

Multicultural Classroom Design:

India is a melting pot even in the classroom. Students of different cultures need to experience validation of their own culture within the context of learning. Teachers have an opportunity to celebrate the cultural differences of students within the curriculum, the classroom environment and the shared experiences of students. Multiculturalism is the celebration of different cultures while finding areas of commonality. A practical way to promote multiculturalism is to decorate the classroom with posters, bulletin boards and models. This helps students of different cultures to connect with the overall theme. Encourage students to assist in decorating the classroom and providing artifacts or props from their own home.

Multicultural Curriculum:

Another strategy is to integrate the curriculum with persons from different cultures. In addition, the teacher has the opportunity to invite professionals from different cultures to share with students on subject matter. This helps students appreciate the educational value and knowledge of other persons who may be culturally different.

Multicultural Celebrations:

Students love to celebrate. Another strategy in implementing multicultural concepts is to capitalize on national celebrations of multicultural peoples. Such celebrations include Eid, Diwali, Pateti, and Natal. A multicultural classroom can produce a rich and creative learning environment for both the students and the teacher. As the world becomes more interconnected, it is common for contemporary classrooms to be culturally diverse. A culturally diverse classroom presents the teacher with a number of challenges. The goal is to use a multicultural classroom to enhance the educational experience of all the students while avoiding the risk of stereotyping students or thinking in terms of cultural clichés.

The Teacher's Role:

The teacher is the dominant figure in the classroom and subsequently has the responsibility and opportunity to be the role model for the students. The teacher's personality sets the tone and standard for classroom participation and interaction. In order to teach effectively in a multicultural environment, the teacher must be self-aware of her background assumptions, biases and prejudices.

Classroom Environment:

A classroom that is sensitive to cultural diversity and differences is essential for creating a learning environment conducive for students from varied backgrounds. Encourage students to interact and participate in classroom discussion and dialogue but recognize that the cultural background of some students may make them hesitant to be vocal in the classroom. A multicultural classroom provides the opportunity for students to enrich the classroom by bringing their multiple perspectives and backgrounds to a discussion of various issues and topics. However, the teacher should avoid singling out individual students as representative of their ethnic or cultural group. Stereotyping students fails to respect their individuality and makes broad general assumptions about their background and experiences.

Conclusions and practical implications:

All things considered, it can be seen that there are some serious problems that are likely to be encountered when two or more cultures come into contact in educational settings. Heterogeneous attitudes of students from different part of Indians revealed while teaching. Implications that could be provided are, above all, to be open to other nations and cultures and to try to familiarize the students with the differences between the patterns of behavior of the representatives of various nationalities, sub-cultures etc.

The role of the teacher is vital because the teacher is the person who builds the atmosphere during the class and through equal treatment he/she can make it easier for the students coming from different backgrounds to feel good in the group. Students that are treated equally are not likely to bear any grudges towards foreigners obtaining better marks. Besides, the authorities of higher education institutions should select students more carefully to ensure a comparable level of English among all students in a particular group. Moreover, visiting professors should also fulfill some criteria concerning their ability of using any language that will be the language of Instruction at a given course.

On the whole, although there are various problems concerning learning and teaching in a multicultural environment, it should not be forgotten that there are also serious benefits that can be taken from multicultural education. What is more, learning and teaching in Multicultural settings is inevitable as the world is a global village nowadays and our mobility abilities are bigger than ever. We should try to take advantage from multiculturalism and try to love it, or, at least to bear it.

References

- Boutte, G. 1999. Higher Education. In G. Boutte (ed) Multicultural Education Raising Consciousness. (199-227). Menlo Park, CA: Wadsworth*
- Longman Dictionary of Teaching and Applied Linguistics 2002,311.*
- Blank, H, Schulman, K. & Ewen, D. (1999). Seeds of Success, State Prekindergarten Initiatives, 1998-1999. Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund.*
- Bowman, B. T., Donovan, M. S. & Burns, M. S. (2001). Eager to learn. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.*
- Bryant, D., Clifford, R., Pianta, R. C., Howes, C. & Burchinal, M. (2002) (in press). Characteristics of prekindergarten programs in six-states: Children, teachers, and programs. Applied Developmental Science.*
- Clifford, D. & Maxwell, K. (2002). The need for highly qualified prekindergarten teachers. Paper presented at the Preparing Highly Qualified Prekindergarten Teachers*