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MULTICULTURAL TEACHER EDUCATION

by
Carol L. Birnbohm

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Mater of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 2000

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved

May 2000

Abstract

Carol L. Birnbohm

Multicultural Teacher Education
2000
Ronald L. Capasso, Ed.D.
Education Administration

The purpose of this study was to create a method of incorporating multicultural thinking with current curriculums. The main goal was to have the teachers learn that multicultural education is not a one-day, once a year event, but rather a philosophy that must be a part of their everyday lessons and discussions.

Nineteen teachers and 102 students were surveyed from Cherokee High School. There were nine males and ten females in the teaching category. There were 52 male students and 50 female students.

The surveys were distributed twice to each group. The survey was first given prior to any training in Dr. Nieto's philosophy. Each question in the survey was designed to ascertain whether or not this type of teaching is necessary at Cherokee High School and whether or not the teachers had any prior knowledge of the philosophy of multicultural education. Then, the teachers were trained in Dr. Nieto's practices. Upon completion of their next set of lesson plans, both groups were given the second round of surveys.

The researcher found that the teachers were successful in conveying Dr. Nieto's philosophy of multicultural education. This was indicated by the student and teacher responses to the survey.

Mini-Abstract

Carol L. Birnbohm

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2000
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The goal of this study was to have teachers learn that multicultural education is not a one-day, once a year event, but rather a philosophy that becomes a part of everyday lessons. Through survey research, the researcher found that teachers were successful in incorporating Nieto's philosophy with their current curriculums.

Acknowledgments

The multicultural education study was conducted at Cherokee High School, Marlton, New Jersey. This study was part of the course requirements for the Practicum and Seminar in School Administration I and II, for Rowan University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Carol L. Birnbohm, who is now at 158 Baker Avenue, Atco, NJ, 08004. Electronic mail may be sent via Internet to coachbirn@aol.com.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

The Constitution of the United States makes it clear that educational decisions should be made at the state or local level. However, the Civil Rights movement with the 1954 *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, which overturned the 1896 Plessy decision, created an atmosphere that state and local municipalities were not ready to combat. The Brown decision rendered that all public schools are to be desegregated, and that all segregated schools were illegal. The Supreme Court gave no remedy for the tension that was to follow that decision. The subsequent desegregation of schools revealed a pervasively bigoted system where an Anglo-centered world view predominated and minority groups were made to feel inferior, cultureless, devoid of history, uneducable and unintelligent (Lewis, 1988). After the Brown decision, it was evident that in order for all to succeed, the curriculum and attitudes of the teachers needed to change. Following this, New Jersey enacted several statutes regarding equal educational opportunities. These statutes have been the driving forces behind education that is multicultural in nature.

Addressing the need for an education that is multicultural in nature may decrease school violence. Currently, one cannot open a newspaper without seeing an article about school violence. The violence that occurs is either the result of the majority attacking the minority or the minority, having been harassed, fighting back with violence aimed at the

majority. In either case, state laws that were created to stop discrimination of all students regardless of “race, color or natural origin,” have no impact on the covert harassment that continues in today’s schools. This covert racism is harder to detect than the burning crosses of the 1950’s. Classroom settings are becoming an arena where individual differences are singled out, and mocked. It is important that **all** Americans realize that they have different roots. The remedy will not be found in pointing out the differences, but in pointing out the similarities across ethnic, cultural, and orientation boundaries.

The purpose of this project is to introduce multicultural education to the teachers of Cherokee High School. This will aid in fulfilling a required goal established by the Lenape Regional Long-Range Planning Committee. But it will also aid in fulfilling the dream that was created in 1954, by the Supreme Court. A dream that **all** children should harmonize to create a society without fear of differences but celebrations of similarities.

Through a survey, the Intern will determine the areas of diversity that are of interest to the school’s faculty, students and surrounding population. This information will guide the Intern to appropriate topics that will be informative and interesting to the teachers at Cherokee.

The Intern wants to learn about the unique diverse population that influences Cherokee High School’s culture. The subjects that will be studied in this project will be a sample of faculty and students at Cherokee High School and a sample of the surrounding community members. This study will be conducted during the fall semester of the 1999-2000 school year. It is imperative that this study be conducted because it will direct the Intern to the areas that should be covered in the multicultural teacher education program.

The results from the survey will be the topics presented to the teachers, during the diversity training.

Purpose of the Study

An outcome goal will be to create a boilerplate for the English Department's teachers. If the program is successful, then a proposal will be made to include all of Cherokee's departments in the future.

The boilerplate should be an instrument that teachers can use to implement a multicultural curriculum. This will be completed by first determining what areas of diversity are of interest to Cherokee High School's faculty, students and surrounding population. This study will provide the Intern with valuable concepts of multicultural education that will be utilized in implementing a multicultural teacher education program.

The purpose of this project is to provide teachers with a better understanding of the diverse student body and community. This will provide students with an enhanced, more tolerant learning environment.

This study will provide the Intern with information regarding the unique and diverse population of attending students and teachers at the high school. Another purpose of this project is to help satisfy one of the Long Range Planning Goals of the Lenape Regional High School District. A multicultural teacher education program will provide the staff with valuable information on diversity. Diversity will become the framework of the culture of Cherokee High School. In an effort to start small, evaluate progress, and grow, the study will affect one department at Cherokee High School.

Definitions

Boilerplate – A sheet of directions and guidelines allowing all teachers whom use it to

teach uniformly and achieve similar goals.

Long Range Planning Goals – A series of goals that were designed by teachers, administration and community members to improve the Lenape Regional High School District.

Multicultural – A society that encompasses all backgrounds. Culture is not limited to ethnic origin. Cultures exist as economic differences, handicap differences, differences between the sexes, sexual orientation differences and age differences.

Limitations of the Study

This study and the intended outcome of this study were designed for the students of Cherokee High School and the English teachers at Cherokee. The Intern chose Cherokee as a matter of convenience and because Cherokee is the most diverse, ethnically speaking, of the three schools in the district. Only 90% of the Cherokee population speak English at home as a first language. This is compared to the 96% at Lenape and the 100% at Shawnee High School (State Report Card, 1997).

Setting of the Study

Cherokee High School is located in Evesham Township, New Jersey. The majority of the people of Evesham Township are middle to upper-middle class citizens. The major religion in the town is Catholicism. About fifty percent of the parents of our students are divorced or remarried. Many of the parents make their living in Philadelphia, as it is about a thirty-minute commute from Evesham to Philadelphia. There has not been a time when the budget for the school has not passed. If one based the level of community support on that parameter, then one could conclude that Evesham supports Cherokee. However, with a student population of nearly 2000 students, only

twenty to thirty parents are involved in the principal's monthly open meetings. The residents willingly supply the finances for their school to function, but not their time.

The District

The Lenape Regional High School District serves eight municipalities. They are the townships of Evesham, Medford, Mount Laurel, Shamong, Southampton, Tabernacle and Woodland and the borough of Medford Lakes, grades nine through twelve. This rural suburban district has a population 135,000. The Lenape Regional High School District is the largest of the 44 Burlington County districts. It encompasses 350 square miles, forty-three percent of the entire area of Burlington County, the largest county in New Jersey.

The Lenape Regional High School District is comprised of three high schools, Lenape, Shawnee and Cherokee. Lenape, the oldest of the three schools, opened its doors in September 1958. It currently houses students from Mount Laurel, Southampton, Woodland and some parts of Medford. Shawnee, the second oldest high school, opened its doors on November 1, 1971. If one resides in Medford Lakes, Medford, Shamong and Tabernacle, then one will attend Shawnee High School. The newest high school in the district is Cherokee High School. Cherokee opened its doors in September 1975 and serves only students from Evesham Township.

Each high school was created to alleviate the rapidly growing townships that are a part of the district. When Lenape surpassed the 1000 student capacity in 1961, an addition was constructed to raise the capacity to 1500 students. By 1962 the population growth required a second addition to be added to Lenape. The North Building at Lenape was dedicated in 1965. By 1967, it was apparent to the administration that new additions

were not going to accommodate the continuing growth, a referendum for a new high school was passed. In 1971, half of the students that attended Lenape were transferred to Shawnee. By the 1972-1973 school year, the district enrollment had swelled to nearly 4000 students with continued growth expected in the future. This knowledge sparked the passing of a referendum for a third high school, Cherokee. In 1975, freshman and sophomores from Evesham Township attended the newest of the three schools.

During the late 1980's the district still showed steady growth. All three facilities received additions and endured renovation projects. At Lenape, a new media center, music wing, auxiliary gymnasium, weight room and storage areas were constructed. Shawnee and Cherokee, created from the same blueprints, each received twenty-five classrooms, 2 gymnasiums, additional locker room facilities, storage areas and an auxiliary cafeteria. The last major work was completed in 1991.

The Lenape Regional High School District is one of the most rapidly growing municipalities of New Jersey (see Figure 1). "Phenomenal" is the word that Dr. W. Frank Johnson, an expert in the field of education facilities planning, recently used to describe the population explosion that has taken place since the Lenape District opened its doors nearly forty years ago. In another illustration (see Table 1) one can see that Evesham, Mount Laurel and Medford Township have grown the most rapidly. This is because the remaining communities are Pinelands Communities. Tight restrictions set in the Pineland's preservation plan has forced limited residential development over the past twenty-seven years, except, for the large retirement community, Leasuretowne, in Southampton.

Today, the district services nearly 6000 students. It is projected that by the year 2005 the number of students will be somewhere between 8000 and 8500. In 1998, the Lenape Regional High School District's community members voted "yes" to a fourth high school and the addition of a 9th – 10th grade building to the existing Cherokee High School. A redistricting is planned for the arrival of the new high school. The fourth high school will service Shamong, Southampton, Tabernacle and Woodland. Shawnee will service Medford and Medford Lakes. Lenape will house Mount Laurel students only and Cherokee will continue to provide service to Evesham Township residents.

A unique battle in the Lenape Regional High School District has been occurring for the last year and a half over the location of the fourth high school. This battle has the potential to threaten the culture at Cherokee High School. This threat could adversely affect the Intern's experience through out the study.

The threat to the location of the fourth high school is brought forth by groups such as the Sierra Club and The Girl Scouts of America. These environmentalists and organizations have been criticizing the district for planning a school in the Pinelands. Even though the district sought Pineland approval and the community members of Tabernacle, the proposed location in the Pinelands, voted "yes" to a new school in their town, organizations are stepping forward to protest the new school's location. And despite the zero rating (on a scale of zero to forty, with forty being the best quality) assigned to the site from the Pinelands Commission, in regards to land quality, people are arguing that the district is circumventing the Pinelands Protection Act.

This battle overwhelms the administration and much of their energy is spent on educating the faculty, the community and the media on the district's justification and

perspective. As imagined, the climate of the faculty of all three schools' is one of frustration. Some schools in the district are feeling the overcrowdedness already, by teaching in trailers and any available space, such as cafeterias and media centers. The entire faculty in the district is consistently advised by administration of the current "battle standings" at each faculty gathering. Each district in-service begins with a speech from the superintendent, Dr. Hicks, about the importance and value found in building a fourth school in the Pinelands. The frustration resulting from the increasing student population and the lectures endured at each educational gathering threaten to deteriorate the professional culture.

Significance of the Study

A multicultural teacher education program is needed prior to providing a multicultural program for the students at Cherokee High School. Many teachers are unaware of the diverse backgrounds that encompass the student body. This project should open the minds of the teachers and provide a sense of commonality for our students. Informed teachers will provide their students with a comprehensive and diverse learning opportunities. This project will also allow teachers to bring information from other cultures into their classroom.

The ultimate phenomenon that should occur is the creation of an informed faculty and student body that will treat people that are different with tolerance. This project will allow people with different ethnic backgrounds to witness cultural similarities. A lesson in tolerance will prepare students to function beyond the classroom setting, and into an ever changing and diverse world. This will be accomplished by piloting the boilerplate in

the English Department. Upon evaluation of the program and some fine-tuning, the program is intended for school-wide usage.

Organization of the Study

The following chapters will focus on (Chapter Two): Review of the Literature, (Chapter Three): Design of the Study, (Chapter Four): Presentation of the Research Findings, and (Chapter Five): Conclusions, Implications and Further Study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

In a report of the proceedings and task outcomes of the first working conference of the Northeast Consortium for Multicultural Education (NCME), one can find the meaning of successful multicultural education (1993). It was here, at this conference that a distinguished panel of experts worked cooperatively to help multiculturalism evolve. By accomplishing their difficult tasks the professionals were able to offer words of wisdom and guidance. Their first task was to create a working definition for multicultural education. After several drafts, this is the definition that most of the experts agreed upon:

Education that is multicultural is a dynamic and life-long process of teaching and learning that fosters critical thinking, cultural awareness, language proficiency, cooperation, self-esteem, community concern, and transformative social action. Advocates for multicultural education work to promote social justice, educational equity and excellence (p. 8).

This definition is a far cry from the food and festival approach that inhabits most of our school systems. In past, most school administrators believe that having a holiday recognized, or eating foods from other cultures satisfied their obligation to deliver an education that is free from bias. All public schools in New Jersey are required to prepare students to relate in mutually beneficial ways with people of diverse races, cultures,

national origins, and both sexes so as to function effectively in a pluralistic society. An effective multicultural education will satisfy this obligation.

To measure success of a multicultural program, Dr. Sonia Nieto reminds us that one must remember that “student learning must be at the center” of any educational decision (p. 5). If diversified education does not advance learning, then why do it? A visit to the literature on this topic reveals that there are many studies that show that racism negatively affects learning. Adversely, multicultural education promotes learning.

Angela Taylor (1991) found that, “to the extent that teachers harbor negative racial stereotypes, the African American child’s race *alone* is probably sufficient to place him or her at risk for negative school outcomes” (Taylor, 1991, p. 17). She used a term coined by Thomas and Chess, to help illustrate that teachers harbor negative racial stereotypes. *Goodness-of-fit*, the coined term, refers to the match between a child’s temperament and the demands of the social context. Children that can display they are able to cope with the transition to schooling will most likely be labeled as having a *good-fit* to their teachers’ expectations for classroom behavior. In summary, teachers have positive expectations and attitudes towards students who are cooperative and negative attitudes towards students who are overly active and distractible. Keogh (as cited in Taylor, 1991) states that these negative expectations were found to influence the nature of the teacher-child communications in the classroom, teacher evaluations of student classroom performance, and teacher decisions about student grades. Irvine, (as cited in Taylor, 1991) found that young African-American children are distinguishable from their White counterparts. He found that the young African-Americans were more likely to display higher rates of motor activity, more expressive social-interpersonal

styles, and use of slang dialect. This could result in the teachers displaying negative attitudes towards those behaviors, and thus, towards those children displaying those behaviors. This would support Taylor's theory that race alone can hinder teachers' pre-judgments of their students. The pre-judgment that the teachers harbor is a sufficient illustration of poor *goodness-of-fit*, or better a "lack-of-fit."

Poplin and Weeres (1993) conducted a study that similarly illustrates that race negatively affects student learning. The extensive study took one year to collect data. The subjects for the study came from four schools, located in four different school districts, in urban and suburban areas surrounding Los Angeles. The first school chosen was a high school with 2400 students. The high school is one of seven in an urban district. The second school chosen was a middle school that is a feeder to the selected high school and services approximately 1000 students. The remaining two schools chosen were elementary schools. One elementary school housed 650 students and is from an urban district and the other elementary school housed 350 students from a small suburban district. The population make-up for the study was fifty-one percent Latino-American, twenty-five percent Euro-American, and twelve percent African-American. The remaining twelve percent included Asian-American, Pacific Island-American and Middle Eastern-American students. Only one of the schools in the study utilized progressive hiring techniques, which includes hiring bicultural and bilingual teachers. The other three schools had ninety percent of its faculty that were white. Data was gathered through a series of interviews and questionnaires. Most of the middle and high school students interviewed by Poplin and Weeres witnessed incidents of racism in school and relate this racism to a larger society beyond school boundaries. The

elementary students reported that racism exists at their school. Elementary school racism can be mainly characterized as name-calling. The study found no significant outcome on data related to teachers' opinions of racism. The staffs were divided on issues such as the existence of racism and the evidence that their attitudes affect the learning of the students. According to Poplin and Weeres, the mere fact that the majority of the teachers cannot share in the life experiences of the families in which their students originate from will enable the students to perceive them as uncaring and empathetic. Whether or not the teachers display prejudices, learning is affected. Students' claims suggest that they learn to doubt the very substance of what is being taught as a result of disproportional staffing and curricula that is one-sided.

It is important to note at this point that Poplin and Weeres's study has its own disproportional characteristics. The main inconsistency lies in the selection of the participating schools. Three of the four schools chosen for the study were from urban districts. This yielded a sample that was ninety-two percent urban students and only eight percent suburban students. Also, the study did not reveal the make-up of the panel that evaluated the data. Since the data was mostly subjective in nature, the race of the evaluator could adversely affect the interpretation of the data.

Racism affects everyone. Donaldson (as cited in Nieto, 1994) conducted a similar interview-style study. She found that all students, regardless of ethnic background, reveal evidence that negative outcomes of racism exist. Over eighty percent of the students surveyed in her study reported that they had perceived racism to exist in school. She found two major ways in which students said they were affected. The first negative outcome Donaldson found in her study was a sense of guilt felt by the Euro-American

students. She revealed that white students felt a sense of guilt when they became aware of the racism subjected to their minority classmates. Minority students reported the second major way in which students were affected by racism. Donaldson found that the minorities felt the need to overcompensate in order to prove equality of their white peers. Yet overcompensation and achievement of goals with high standards does not bridge the barrier between the perceptions of the different races. Illustrating this fact, one African-American author and lawyer reported that his white peers minimized his achievements. He stated that their reactions were negative when he revealed that he was accepted to Yale. His white peers assumed that he achieved entry as a result of Affirmative Action (Arredondo, Toporek, Brown, Jones, Locke, Sanchez, & Stadler, 1996).

The three previous studies support the premise that racism negatively affects learning for all involved. After discovering this to be true, it is necessary to test whether or not the converse of this premise is true. The converse would be that multicultural education promotes learning.

One study, which reveals the positive effects of multicultural education, was conducted by Abi-Nader (as cited in Nieto, 1994). The study was conducted in a large urban high school, which was predominately Hispanic. The study involved the implementation and evaluation of a new program that was to be piloted. The new program altered the curriculum to include students' cultural values. The most prevalent program adjustment was made with regards to the family culture of the Hispanic youth. Abi-Nader suggests that the family life or issues concerning *familia* have the most important effects on their lives. The program was designed to include the culture's values in everyday classroom interactions. Upon completion of this program, the high

school produced a sixty-five percent college enrollment by their Hispanic graduates. A percentage that is unlike the “dismal dropout statistics prevalent in so many other Hispanic communities” (Abi-Nader, as cited in Nieto, 1994, p. 417). Evaluations of Abi-Nader’s study/program revealed that the students attributed their academic success to the new curriculum. One comment which summarizes the majority of the findings is, “The best thing I like about this class is that we all work together and we all participate and try to help each other. We’re family!” (Abi-Nader, as cited in Nieto, 1994, p. 418).

Dr. Nieto conducted another study, which supports the premise that multicultural education promotes a better learning environment. In this study, student narratives about multicultural education revealed many positive stories. Yolanda, a young student who was given the support of her teachers and their affirmation of her language and her culture, reported one instance. She stated, “Actually, it’s fun around here if you really get into learning . . . I like learning. I like really getting my mind working.” Manuel, another non-European youth proclaimed how crucial it was for teachers to become aware of students’ cultural values and backgrounds. He said of his teachers:

If you don’t know a student, there’s no way to influence him. If you don’t know his background, there’s now way you are going to get in touch with him. There’s no way you’re going to influence him if you don’t know where he’s been
(p. 418).

It was surprising to Dr. Nieto how little young people believe they deserve a diverse education. Her study revealed that the teachers need to create an atmosphere where students can believe they have a “chance to dream.”

A third student-centered study was conducted by Louis Harris for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (1996). The Census Bureau estimates that by 2000, one in three children will be of racial or ethnic background other white. Harris believes that, as a result of this trend, the need for multicultural education in the nation's schools is growing rapidly. This study was valuable because it interviewed 2,524 public school students in grades 7 through 12 nationwide, regardless of the ethnic background of the students. The sample was selected to consider differences in grade enrollment, region and the size of the district where the schools were located. Schools were randomly selected from the schools in the pool mentioned previously. To determine the number of students, Harris used the National Center for Educational Statistics as a model. His study shows that 61% of the students surveyed nationally say that their school offers classes on the history and culture of people whom have "immigrated to the United States from different regions of the world." Surveys revealed that as school settings changed from urban to suburban to rural, that classes on multiculturalism increased (57% to 62% to 68%). Harris was surprised that our urban schools, comprised mostly of minorities, were not placing enough emphasis on multicultural education.

Studies have revealed education that is multicultural in nature increases student's learning environment. Studies also revealed that not all of our schools in the nation are adequately providing this type of experience for its students. With research supporting the fact that all schools need to improve their multicultural education programs, the Lenape Regional High School District will comply. In fact, the district created a Long-Range Goal pertaining directly to education that is multicultural in nature. This Long-Range Goal will be accomplished by educating the staff how to teach tolerance and

cultural diversity. Cultural diversity exists within race. Certain social groups have unique cultures that students need to be aware of. There is gender bias, socioeconomic level bias and individual circumstances bias (handicaps, for example) (Jablow, 1995). By discussing only racial differences, group stereotyping will not cease. Voicing the differences in all cultures, within each race, children can find people who are very similar to them, yet not from the same race. Learning these valuable lessons in school will help students adjust to an ever changing and diverse society.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

Research Design

The research design that the Intern has chosen to conduct for this project is considered to be Survey Research (Weirisma, 1995). A brief description of the design is as follows: First, the Intern will survey the faculty of the English department and the students of Cherokee. These surveys should reveal knowledge in what the teachers and the students feel about a diverse education. Information gathered from this survey should also reveal how much they understand the scope of multicultural education. Second, with the aid of several English teachers, a template will be designed to instruct all of the English teachers in incorporating multicultural education into their daily lessons. Third, participating teachers from the English department will utilize the template during their classes. Last, the Intern will survey the teachers and the students after the implementation of the multicultural education program. This survey should reveal how effective the program was in educating Cherokee's students about diversity.

Development of the Research Instruments

The survey instruments were created by gleaning information from Nieto's (1994) study on multicultural education. She states that it is necessary to understand how students feel about the curriculum they must learn. Her philosophy provided the background for questions five, six and seven (see Appendices A and B for complete survey).

Nieto also believes that it is important to learn what the students think about the pedagogical strategies their teachers use. Questions two and three evolved as a result of that view.

Questions one and ten were created to reveal if teachers and students understood the definition of culture as defined by Nieto. Nieto explains that culture is not defined solely as the ethnic background from which one is derived. Culture could be the age one is, the educational track one is placed in, the gender of a person, the religion of an individual and the family structure from which an individual is derived (Nieto as cited in Jablow, 1998).

Finally questions four, eight and nine address the true scope and root of multicultural education. Nieto believes that instead of teachers pointing out the differences of each culture, teachers should strive to point out the similarities across the cultures. Discovering common characteristics, one will have a better chance of bridging the gaps that exist from one culture to another. For example, if Student A is of Asian descent and Student B is from European decent, the teacher should have the students complete exercises that reveal what they have in common. The students, from entirely different ethnic cultures, may discover that they are both products of a single parent, in the same socio-economic level and harbor the same educational goals. These students are being taught to look beyond the obvious differences and find similarities in their cultures.

Design of the Research Instruments

The instruments used in this project were designed to be completed in one sitting. At the top of the survey there are two questions that were designed to provide the Intern with specific demographics of each individual in the sample. For example, teachers were

asked to reveal the number of years they have as teaching experience and students were asked to state their year in high school. Individuals from the sample were also asked to reveal their gender.

A selected-response format was used on the remainder of the questionnaire. Each question was designed to yield one of five Likert responses: *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neutral*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*. No part of the survey contains any free-response items. This was decided by the Intern to make interpreting the data less open to intervening variables.

Description of the Sample

The population in which the sample was chosen from was the faculty at Cherokee, and the students at Cherokee. Each teacher from the English department was used to represent the faculty sample. Since the goal or main objective of this project is to yield a product that will be utilized in the English department, only the English teachers were surveyed.

There are 1,984 students in Cherokee. This number is too large, and would make compilation of the data very difficult. To decide which students should be selected, the Intern decided to utilize Homogeneous Sampling combined with Random Sampling. Every student is required to take four years of high school English, so surveying the students in their English classes will ensure that every student has an equal chance of being selected. The English classes are classified by grade and level of difficulty within each grade. By performing straight random sampling, these homogeneously grouped classes could skew the results if, for instance, only twelfth grade classes were randomly selected. Twelfth graders have experienced more and may have closer relationships with

their teachers that could make them sympathetic towards them, and their answers may not be as honest. To ratify this dilemma, each English class offered at Cherokee was classified by grade level. An equal amount of freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior classes were randomly selected from each category.

Description of the Data Collection

To yield a high response rate for the teacher surveys, the department supervisor was asked to distribute the surveys at a monthly department meeting. The department supervisor was also asked to read the cover letter to his faculty and collect the surveys at the end of the meeting.

To yield a high response rate for the students, the teachers of the selected classes were asked to distribute the surveys during class. The teachers were instructed to read the cover letter to their students and collect the surveys immediately.

In both instances, the cover letter contained many key phrases to also insure a low non-response occurrence (see Appendices C and D). The cover letter revealed the importance of the survey and it expressed appreciation to the respondent. Data collection was also maintained by creating a neat one-page survey.

Chapter 4

Presentation of the Research Findings

Results of the Survey Instruments

There were nineteen surveys distributed to the English teachers of Cherokee High School and one hundred and nine surveys distributed to various students. One hundred percent of the teacher surveys were completed both prior to the implementation of the multicultural template and after the implementation of the template. The researcher concludes from this perfect rate of response, that the supervisor distributing and collecting the questionnaires during his department meetings, was an effective method of surveying the teachers. One hundred and two of the student surveys were completed prior to the implementation of the multicultural instrument. This is a 93.6 % rate of response. One reason that all of the surveys were not completed was due to the absenteeism of some students the day the surveys were distributed. Other surveys had to be eliminated from the study because some participants did not follow directions. For example, one student responded by circling every item on the survey. And a few other students responded with multiple answers for certain questions. Prior to the distribution of the second round of surveys, the teachers were instructed to read the directions aloud to the students and to remind the students that this is an important survey that should be taken seriously. The second round of surveys showed an increase in the response rate with one hundred and six surveys completed by the students. This is a 97% rate of

response. The difference can be attributed to less number of students absent and fewer respondents not following directions.

Of the nineteen teachers that were surveyed, five had 1-5 years of teaching experience, two had 6-10 years, two had 11-15 years, and ten had 16 or more years of teaching experience. There were nine males and ten females in the sample. The total number of females for each category was as follows: three in the first category, two in the second, one in the third, and four in the last category. The number of male teachers was as follows: two in the first category, none in the second category, one in the third category, and six in the last category. In each of the categories of teaching experience, the number of female teachers was distributed more uniformly than the number of males. Sixty-seven percent of the male teachers had sixteen or more years of teaching experience, while only 40% of the female teachers had sixteen or more years of teaching experience.

Of the one hundred and two student surveys collected, the number of male students to female students was more evenly distributed than the teacher sample. There were fifty-two male students and fifty female students. Of the one hundred and six student surveys collected, the male to female ratio was similar to the first round of surveys. The male to female ratio was fifty-four to fifty-two. The main reason that the number of males was close to the number of females for the student portion of the research was because the students are scheduled in classes of equal or close to equal proportions. The distribution of students across the four grades was also even due to the fact that one class from each grade was selected for the sample.

The Teacher Responses

For questions one through four the majority of the teachers responded by circling *Agree*, both before the project and after the project. This portrays that teachers feel that they have a sufficient knowledge base of multicultural education. It also portrays that teachers already feel that they are supplying a diverse experience for their students. This contradicts with their response to question five pertaining to whether or not they acknowledge different cultures in their classroom. Prior to the project, the majority of the teachers responded neutrally to this question. After the project was implemented, most of the teachers agree that they acknowledge different cultures.

The teachers' responses to question six indicated that they neither agree nor disagree that their curriculum is too full to incorporate a diverse experience for their students. This suggests to the researcher that since they already felt that their classroom offered a diverse experience (questions one through five), they did not want anything new to add to their curriculum.

Question seven was designed to apprehend whether or not the teachers felt that Cherokee, as a whole, needs multicultural education, rather than just in their classrooms. Before the project the teachers agreed that it is important to the culture of Cherokee to include such activities. While the males responded with *Agree* again for the second round of surveys, the females responded with *Strongly Agree*. The researcher concludes from this, that there either needs to be more teaching of tolerance at Cherokee, or the existing method of multicultural education is not effective.

Questions eight, nine and ten were designed to ascertain whether or not the faculty knew the definition and major method of multicultural education according to

Nieto. By responding, as the teachers did, to those questions, it suggests to the researcher that they were not properly trained on multicultural education prior to this school year. They believed that pointing out the differences across the cultures was an important method of teaching diversity (see Figure 2). This, according to Nieto, only builds gaps between the cultures. As seen in Figure 3, the majority of the teachers responded that pointing out the differences between the cultures is not important, during the second round of surveys. This phenomenon, the researcher believes, shows that the brief in-service that the teachers received this school year was successful in teaching Nieto's philosophy to the teachers. Dr. Nieto's definition of diversity was also learned by the teachers. This conclusion was drawn from the results of question ten. The first round of responses indicated that teachers were indifferent about the definition of culture. The majority of the teachers responded in equal numbers of six each for: *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, and *Neutral*, indicating that they feel that culture is defined only as the ethnic background one has. During the second round of surveys, the teachers strongly disagreed that ethnicity is the only aspect of culture, thus portraying that they learned Dr. Nieto's definition of culture.

The Student Responses

Questions two, three, five and six were designed to understand how the students feel about their curriculum and the pedagogical strategies their teachers use. By comparing the results of the first round of responses to the results of the second round of responses, it can be concluded that the students feel learning about other cultures was just as important before and after the project. They indicated that prior to the project their

classroom was not a diverse experience, as compared to after the project when they indicated that they had a diverse experience.

The results from questions one and ten indicate that the students learned the true definition of diversity and culture. Their responses were similar to those of their teachers. While question one reveals that the students believed they knew the meaning of diversity, their response to question ten suggests to the researcher that they did not. Figure 4 illustrates that 75% of the students thought ethnicity was the only parameter for measuring the different cultures. During the second round of the survey process (see Figure 5) 91% of the respondents revealed that ethnicity is not the only part of defining what culture one is. The researcher concludes from this that the English teachers were successful in teaching Dr. Nieto's definition of multicultural.

To test if the English teachers were successful in portraying Dr. Nieto's philosophy of diversity questions eight and nine need to be examined. Prior to the project the students correctly answered question nine, revealing that they knew half of Dr. Nieto's philosophy, which is, the importance of learning the similarities between different cultures. The researcher did not hypothesize that the students would be as insightful as they indicated. The other half of Dr. Nieto's philosophy, pointing out the differences between cultures is not an effective method of learning tolerance, was tested in question eight. Figure 6 illustrates that students were unaware of this knowledge prior to the project. An overwhelming 94% of the students did not disagree with the statement "you feel that pointing out the differences in separate cultures is important." However, during the second round of the survey process, the students changed their response (see Figure 7). Ninety-seven percent of the students knew not to agree with the previously

mentioned statement. A conclusion drawn from this can be that the English teachers were successful in revealing the philosophy of Dr. Nieto and more importantly, the students were successful learners.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

Conclusions and Implications

Addressing the need for education that is multicultural in nature has many positive outcomes for schools of the new millennium. The most recent result of bigotry, school violence, is plaguing society's classrooms. The violence that occurs is either the result of the majority attacking the minority or the minority, having been harassed, fighting back with violence aimed at the majority. Multicultural education may decrease this violence.

The purpose of this study was to educate teachers how to teach tolerance through multicultural education. This goal was achieved by training teachers and having them work cooperatively on creating a process in which they can enhance their current curriculums.

The researcher determined that the main purpose of training the teachers should be to educate them on the philosophy of Dr. Nieto. The first aspect of Nieto's beliefs is that the one-day food festival, hero and holiday approach is ineffective in changing adolescence behavior. She has found that the majority of teachers feel they are providing a multicultural education by having nachos in Spanish class or talking about Martin Luther King in history class. This approach only exposes students to a brief introduction of other cultures. It does nothing to end the covert harassment that continues on a daily

basis in the classrooms. As chapter four revealed, the surveys indicated that the faculty adopted this aspect of Nieto's philosophy after training.

The second and final aspect of Nieto's philosophy is that pointing out the differences between the cultures only harbors racism and separatism. Classroom settings are becoming an arena where individual differences are singled out, and mocked. By teaching only differences it increases the gap between the cultures. It adds to the bigotry and provides ammunition in showing just how different someone can be from the majority. The teachers in this study were trained to teach their students the similarities across different cultures. This illustrates to the individual that they have similar experiences, socioeconomic levels, etc. as the majority. This, according to Nieto, will allow young Americans to realize that even though they have different roots, they still have many more things in common. As chapter four revealed, the faculty also adopted this aspect of Nieto's philosophy.

The implications of learning this style of multicultural education directly affected a small percentage of the students at Cherokee. It is the intention of this researcher to allow this style of teaching to be adopted by all of the departments at Cherokee, and not just the English Department. This will expose more students to daily exposure of a multicultural education across the curriculums. Even though every student at Cherokee takes four years of English, it does not guarantee that they are succeeding in that class. If they do not like English or their English teacher, they may not benefit from multicultural enhancement in that subject. By having all subject areas and all teachers adopt this philosophy more students will be positively affected. If a teacher they care about in a subject that interests them is offering this multicultural enhancement, they will be more

apt to learn the message being delivered. Also, this constant deliverance of multicultural education will illustrate consistency and show the students that it is important enough to be taught in all subjects, not just English. Over time, the students will be unable to identify a multicultural activity, because it will be a part of their everyday routine.

Further Study

Once an entire school adopts an education that is multicultural in nature it will be interesting to study the correlation it has on many activities. Such as, does the new style of teaching reduce school violence? It has been nearly fifty years since desegregation became law, and still violent attacks on those that are different, or performed by those that are different by retaliating, still exist in large percentages. A study should be conducted if an invasive multicultural education program could increase tolerance of those that are different and reduce violence.

Another study that may be interesting to perform is whether or not a tolerant environment could produce a more involved student. It is the researcher's assumption that when students feel more comfortable in their environment they will participate in more school activities. But is there a true correlation between learning tolerance and increased participation? This could be explored in a future study.

Other interesting studies can be conducted to determine whether or not there is a correlation between the multicultural education program and attendance and grades. A student that feels more comfortable in their environment may have an improved attendance record. And students that understand one another might work better cooperatively in and out of the classroom, thus improving their grades.

To enhance the multicultural education program, one future endeavor could include new methods for staffing. This could be accomplished by utilizing recruiting agencies that specialize in diversity. The faculty should be indicative of the diverse society that the students will be encountering upon graduation. If a student encounters a teacher in a wheelchair on a daily basis, then his or her comfort levels with someone that is disabled is heightened.

These futuristic visions are just a few of the steps that need to be taken to ensure a diverse, multicultural rich education.

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Table 1.

Population in the Lenape Regional High School District Over the Past Seventy Years

Municipality	30's	40's	50's	60's	70's	80's	90's
Evesham Township	1694	1655	2121	4548	13477	21508	35309
Medford Township	2021	2237	2836	4844	8292	17622	20526
Medford Lakes	na	137	461	2876	4792	4958	4462
Mount Laurel Township	1929	2189	2817	5249	11221	17614	30270
Shamong Township	475	505	712	774	1318	4537	5765
Southampton Township	1637	1813	2341	2166	482	8808	10202
Tabernacle Township	460	490	1034	1621	2103	6236	7360
total	8216	9026	12322	23078	46185	81283	113894

Figure 1. Municipality Growth per decade.

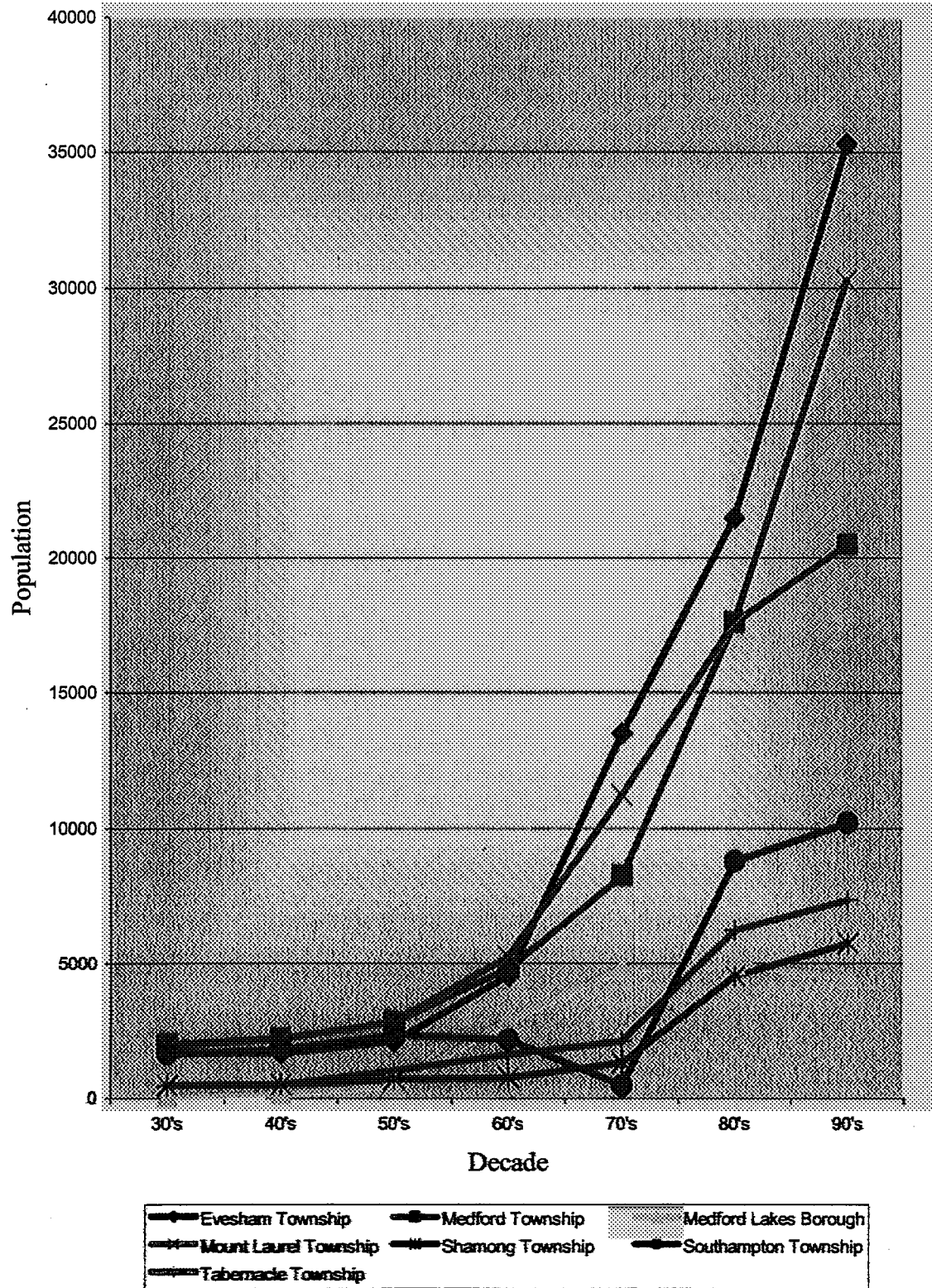


Figure 2. Round One of the Survey Process for teachers.
Question 8. “You feel that pointing out the differences in separate cultures is important.”

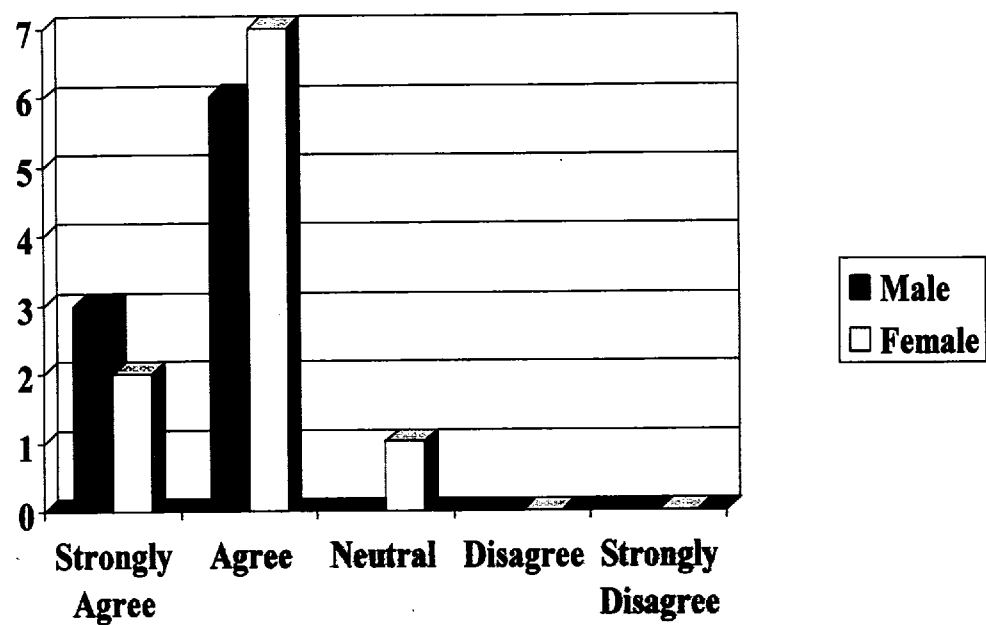


Figure 3. Round One of the Survey Process for teachers.
Question 8. “You feel that pointing out the differences in
separate cultures is important.”

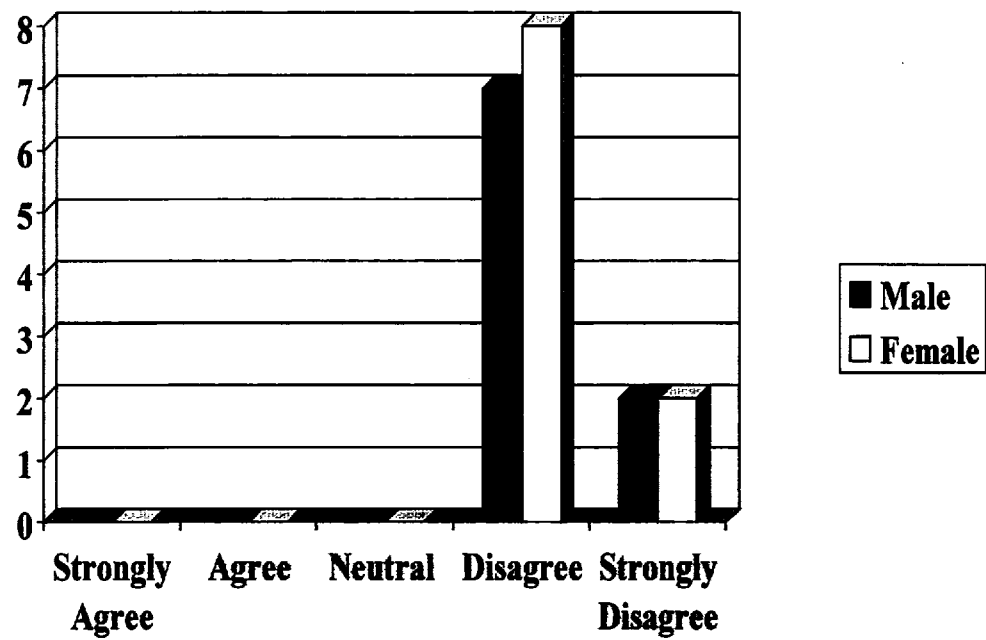


Figure 4. Round One of the Survey Process for the students.
Question 10. “You define culture as what ethnic background one is.”

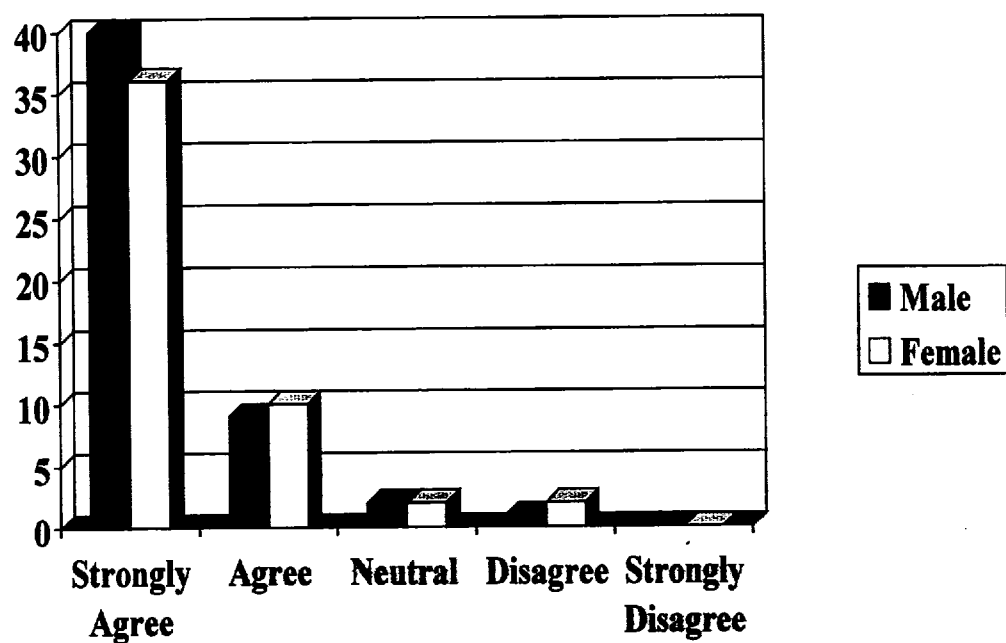


Figure 5. Round Two of the Survey Process for the students.
Question 10. “You define culture as what ethnic background one is.”

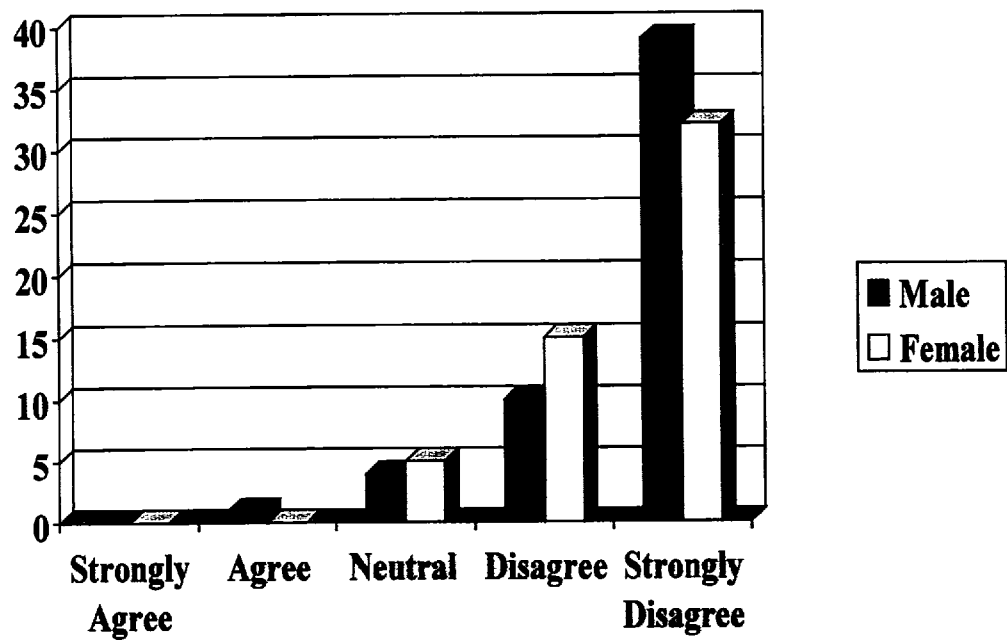


Figure 6. Round One of the Survey Process for the students.
Question 8. “You feel that pointing out the differences in
separate cultures is important.”

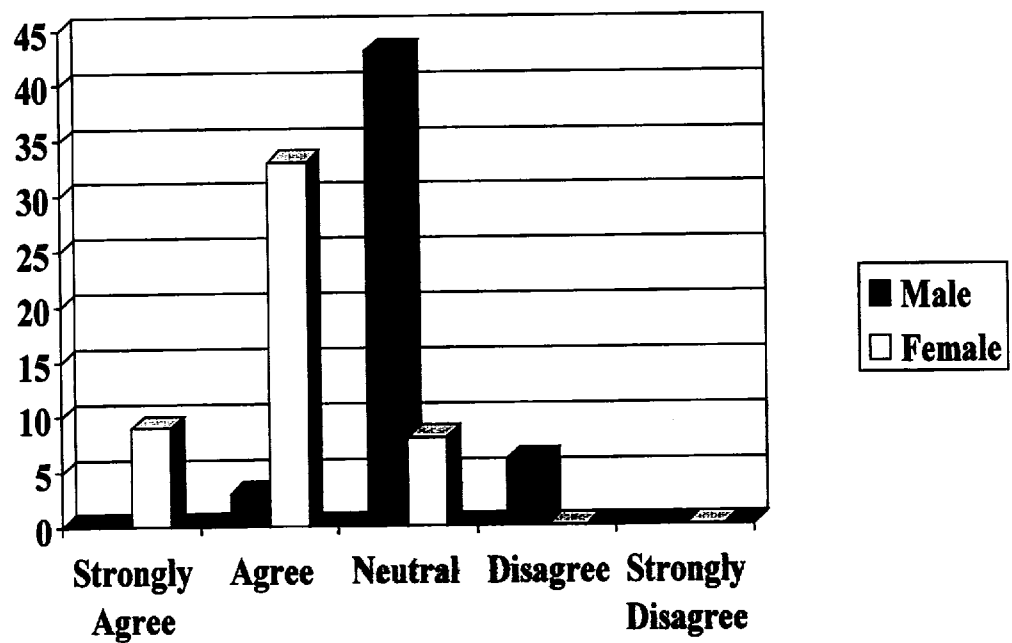
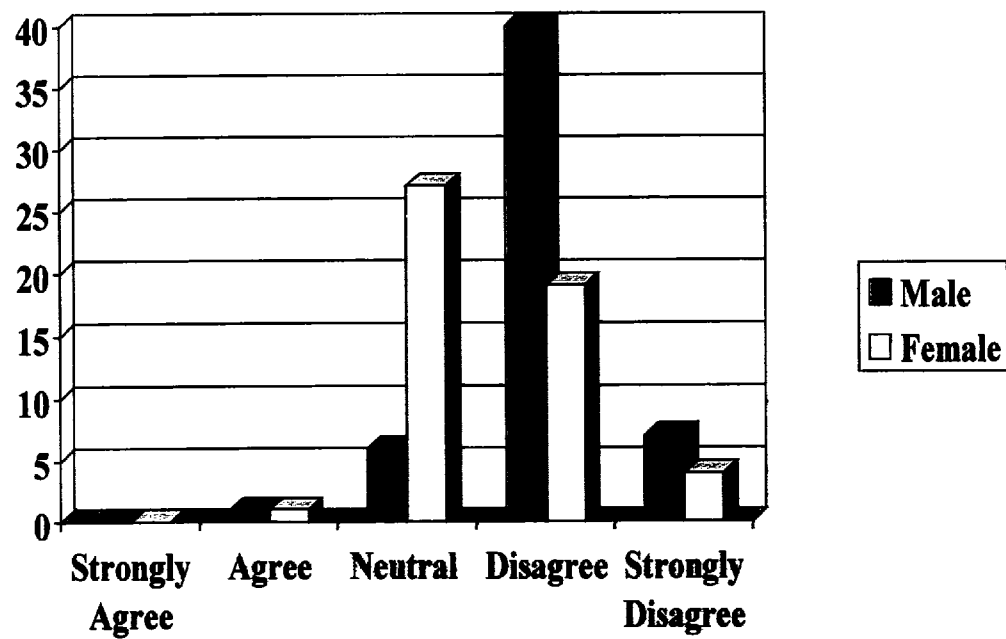


Figure 7. Round Two of the Survey Process for the students.
Question 8. “You feel that pointing out the differences in
separate cultures is important.”



Appendix A
Survey Instrument for Faculty

Please indicate your years of teaching experience, including this year, by circling one of the following responses.

1 – 5

6 – 10

11-15

16 – 20 over 20

Please indicate whether you are male or female.

Male Female

Directions:

Circle the best answer for each question.

1. You are knowledgeable about multicultural education.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

2. You feel qualified to teach about cultures other than your own.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3. Your curriculum could be considered a diverse experience for students.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

4. Lessons about diversity are important to today's students.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

5. You acknowledge different cultures in your classroom.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

6. You feel that your curriculum is too full to incorporate a diverse experience for your students.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

7. Cherokee needs to address tolerance of other cultures.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

8. You feel that pointing out the differences in separate cultures is important.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

9. You feel that pointing out the similarities in separate cultures is important.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

10. You define culture as what ethnic background one is.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Appendix B
Survey Instrument for Students

Please indicate the grade you are currently in.

9th

10th

11th

12th

Please indicate whether you are male or female.

Male

Female

Directions:

Circle the best answer for each question.

1. You are knowledgeable about multicultural education.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

2. You feel your teacher explains about cultures other than your own.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3. Your English class could be considered a diverse experience for you.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

4. Lessons about diversity are important to today's students.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

5. Your teacher acknowledges different cultures in your classroom.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

6. You feel that you are so busy learning the basics that the subject is too full to incorporate a diverse experience for you.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

7. Cherokee needs to address tolerance of other cultures.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

8. You feel that pointing out the differences in separate cultures is important.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

9. You feel that pointing out the similarities in separate cultures is important.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

10. You define culture as what ethnic background one is.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Appendix C

Cover Letter for Faculty

Dear Colleague:

The purpose for this survey is to determine the future of a project about diversity in education. Please answer honestly, as all surveys are anonymous. The information provided by you is not only valuable to the Intern's Master's thesis, but also to the students at Cherokee. Upon completion of this study, you will be asked to respond to a follow-up survey.

Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to answer this brief survey. When you are finished (by *insert date*) please place the completed survey in my mailbox, in the main office.

Thank you,

Carol Birnbohm

Appendix D

Cover Letter for Students

Dear Student:

The purpose for this survey is to determine whether or not an important project should be conducted. Please answer honestly, as all surveys are anonymous. The information provided by you is valuable. Upon completion of this study, you will be asked to respond to a follow-up survey.

Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to answer this brief survey. When you are finished please place the completed survey in the envelope on your teacher's desk.

Thank you.

Biographical Data

Name	Carol L. Birnbohm
High School	Cherokee High School Marlton, NJ 08053
Undergraduate	Bachelor of Arts Math Education Trenton State College Ewing, NJ
Graduate	Master of Arts School Administration Rowan University Glassboro, NJ
Present Occupation	Math Teacher Cherokee High School Marlton, NJ