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A World of Difference: a multicultural program

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A World of Difference

A Multicultural
Program

By
Newton Brown

A Master's Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the
Master of Arts Degree in The Graduate School of
Rowan University
May 2000

Approved by _____
Professor/

Date Approved May 2000

Abstract

Newton Brown

A World of Difference Program
May 2000
Dr. Ronald L. Capasso
Educational Administration

The purpose of the study is to develop aggregated understandings of bias and how it affects violence in a school's culture using action research. The study, through A World of Difference Program's Anti-Bias Study Guide and peer interventions, will result in improved cultural relations. At this stage in the research, bias is studied and acknowledged.

A fifty thousand-dollar grant was awarded to Atlantic City's Board of Education, with one school piloting the program. The A World of Difference Program focuses on training, education, and interactive activities. Student and teacher volunteers, who do the work will recognize and realize, through communications, that we are not so different. As an established program, it has its own built-in longitudinal study designs. Within one year, two needs assessments will be conducted. Evaluation of the program is based on peer training, teacher and parent components, and a sense of renewed relationships. Recruiting new change agents is primary to creating something positive within the organizational culture of this facility.

In concluding, students are less rigid and independent than adults and more apt to participate in new ventures. Organizational culture, leadership roles and decision-making suffer as a result of rigidity. In adults, rigidity and independence run rampant.

Mimi-Abstract

Newton Brown

A World of Difference Program
April 2000
Dr. Ronald Capasso
Educational Administration

The purpose of the study is to develop the idea of bias reduction for A World of Difference Program, using action research, resulting in violence reduction. At this stage of the research, change will be elucidated. Culture, leadership, and decision-making suffer as a result of rigidity.

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Acknowledgments

***I would like to dedicate this work to my father, Newton A. Brown Jr. who passed away not having played a part in this accomplishment, also, to my uncle, Walter Brown who also passed away just before its completion.
“Ribbons in the sky, Dad.”***

This work goes beyond my wildest aspirations and dreams. Following a path set before time had begun is sometimes a difficult road. Had I listened to my guidance counselors, I would not have ventured any further than a twelfth grade education. So I thank those individuals who told me I couldn't.

I would like to thank all the children who were placed in my charge over the past fifteen years. I have learned a wealth of information from all of you of life.

During various stages in my career, I have had many mentors. Thanks to Mrs. Carolyn Greenidge for bring that knowledge to me. She pointed out that at each stage in my development there was always someone who was there to point the way, to act as a beacon along a dark and sometimes lonely road. A road travel more often than I could have imagined, however one on which my footprints were to cast their shadow.

I would like to thank Mr. Constantino Razzino, my first principal, who made me stop and then think when I moved to fast. Etched upon my heart are the words, “See Me, R.” Mr. Herbert Milan, Jr., his vice-principal, who befriended me, and helped me develop the inner tools to deal more effectively with students. When I doubted myself and quit, Mr. O.C. Edwards, God rest his soul, weeded my garden, and replanted the seeds of my destiny. I shall never quit again. I would like to thank Dr. R. Mark Harris, who just because he is, has been an inspiration to me.

I need to thank Renae, my wife, for giving me the support and encouragement to go through this process. I need to thank my family members who constantly inquired into my progress, also giving me their encouragement.

Lastly, I would like to thank the staff at Rowan University. Always presenting a professional but friendly attitude, each one took some time whenever I need help or direction to give me what I needed.

Thank God for each of you who have gone before me to light the way.

Chapter 1—Introduction

Focus of the Study

This study will focus on the collective aspects of change and how members of a community relate to each other when diversity is acknowledged, studied, ultimately embraced, and accepted.

The World of Difference Program focuses on training, education, and interactive activities, which will lead adults and children to recognizing and then give honors to the differences in our society. The premise is that once we begin to communicate we find out that we are not so different. The goal is to give the human, humanity.

Through a series of planned workshops and training sessions, community persons, teachers, administrators, and students will become change agents. Once convinced that the focus of the program will work, these change agents will increase the possibility and probability of making lasting contributions to the community and succeeding generations of students and adults.

The Purpose of this Study:

The intern intends to establish a common base that will provide the opportunity for people of diverse backgrounds, to come together and learn about Organizational Culture, Leadership Roles and Decision-Making methods through group interactions.

The intern will develop leadership skills, through participating in a process that allows people to discover things about themselves. The intern will revisit, revise, and stimulate conditions that will allow volunteers to develop as they learn.

The intern will learn through evaluation and analysis how a given society governs itself when presented with a variety of processes designed to promote “the healing of old

wounds” through the vehicle of open discourse, group interactions, and commitment. The outcome of the program will be to promote democratic ideas and strengthen pluralism.

The overall goal is to bring people together to talk about their own biases, prejudices, and bring out the idea that diversity is a good thing in an inclusive school and community environment. This program will empower students to become active in the war against bigotry, by allowing them to lead workshops for their peers, challenge stereotypes and biases that inhibit intergroup understanding, and engage in “upbeat behavior” that suggest a course of action in school and community befitting maturity and understanding of this situation.

Definitions:

1. *Tolerance*—the capacity for recognizing and accepting religious or social characteristics that differ from one’s own; a readiness to allow others to believe or act as they judge best; the ability or a organism to survive in different conditions.
2. *Conscience*—various factors in moral experience; the recognition and acceptance of a principle of conduct as binding. Divided into two parts: (1) Synderesis is the facility in human beings that know God’s moral law; this facility remand unaffected by the Fall and the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, (2) Conscientia is that faculty by which human beings apply the moral to concrete cases: it dictates what should or should not be done under particular circumstances.
3. *Fatalism*—doctrine that all events occur according to a fixed and inevitable destiny that the individual will neither control nor affect.
4. *Determinism*—states that every event has its determining conditions in its immediate antecedents, which may include the human will: is consistent with a belief in the efficacy of the human will.

5. *Predestination*—is determination plus the belief in a supernatural power that has established a determining natural sequence of causes.
6. *Natural Law*—the permanent characteristics of human nature that can serve as a standard for evaluating conduct and civil laws. It is considered an ideal to which humanity aspires; the way human beings usually act.

Limitations of the Study:

Established in January of 1985, the A World of Difference Program was created through the Anti-Defamation League as a way to stem a tide of racial violence, to heighten public awareness about the debilitating effect of prejudice, and to promote diversity. A World of Difference Institutions' are now organized and operating in the United States and in cities abroad. The city of Atlantic City was awarded a grant of \$50,000.00 to have the program instituted in the public schools system. The Board of Education was required to give \$5,000.00 to bring the total award to \$55,000.00.

The program will begin at Atlantic City High School. There will be one day of training for the entire teaching staff, one day of training for thirty administrators, one-three year peer-training program for thirty students (ADL will provide three full days of training and consistent support), one day for diversity team training with fifteen to thirty people to become facilitators, and one parent showcase.

Prior to the full day workshop, Atlantic City High School received a shipment of Anti-Bias Guides filled with lessons and ideas to help institute the parameters of the program for the classroom teachers. Teacher representatives from the high school and other (K-8) schools in the district were given guideline books, and will be turn-keyed after the diversity team has been trained.

The program is built on a framework of peer trainers, the regional institute office of the ADL, School-Based Coordinator, and the schools administration and staff.

Volunteers will be recruited from various staff members. Two School-Based Coordinators will run the student peer-training program, meeting with them bi-monthly. Once the high school program is operational, the district is obliged to establish this program to the other schools in the district. The evaluated results, for the purpose of this report, of the value and implementation of the program can only be gathered at the high school level. The other schools will have to evaluate their programs separately. The different facilities have situations that are unique to each and will be addressed as such. In the end, the program will become an aid to all the schools in the district.

Setting of the Study:

Atlantic City High School serves an area of 11.94 miles, consisting of Absecon Island and the next island to the North, Brigantine. The present year round population is estimated at 37, 986. This area is divided into five communities: Atlantic City, Brigantine, Longport, Margate, and Ventnor. The school is under the jurisdiction of the Atlantic City Board of Education, with a nine member elected council. In the past, all the elected, voting board members were residents of Atlantic City, however over the last several years, all communities have been given representatives and voting powers. This has created an interesting chain of events.

The entire area is a Republican stronghold, as is the state. Atlantic City is broken into wards, one to six. The first four wards are “economically challenged.” They are composed of lower to middle class African-Americans and Hispanics. There are other ethnic communities that have purchased homes in those wards as a result of new

housing opportunities. The fifth and sixth wards are not as economically challenged. There is a greater emerging middle –income group of people residing there. The ethnic compositions of the neighborhoods are White and Hispanic. At this juncture in the history of Atlantic City, the fifth and sixth wards control the vote. Brigantine and Ventnor are of mixed ethnic diversity. The majority of the residents in Brigantine are homeowners renting to the work force of the Casinos. Ventnor has become the most diverse community with the majority of all types of ethnic groups settling in that area. The majority of the property is rental. Margate, and Ventnor still remain upper middle-class to wealthy neighborhoods. There are little or no rentals with the majority of the owned homes, second homes for persons living out of area.

Before the inception of casino gambling, Brigantine, Longport, Margate, and Ventnor were largely segregated populations. Since the inception of casinos', the divergent population has needed some place to live so these areas have "opened themselves" to those immigrating here. Ventnor as well as a small portion of Brigantine has been offered to the "rental gods." These new communities have also become ethnically divided. There are still a few homes available for sale, but these are very expensive. Families from all corners of the world have moved to Atlantic City, looking for the better life that jobs have to offer. As a result of this migrating community, the school system has a growing multicultural (Hispanic, Asian, and Indian) population.

There are eleven schools in the district. They are: Uptown Complex, New Jersey Avenue, Indiana Avenue, Martin Luther King Complex, Venice Park, Chelsea Heights, Richmond Avenue, Brighton Avenue, Texas Avenue, Ohio Avenue, and Atlantic City High School. There are feeder schools for the sending communities. They are: Brigantine Elementary, Margate Elementary, and Ventnor Elementary. St. James

Elementary, Blessed Sacrament, and St Philips schools are parochial schools and also send their students to the high school. There are 1,758 students enrolled in the elementary schools.

All of these schools have a diverse population of students. The majority of these students will end up at Atlantic City High School, which has an enrollment of 1,959. (1990 census)

Significance of the Study:

We have not done a good job of welcoming others to “our communities”. History has proven numbers of times that mankind left up to their understanding can and will wreak havoc on “differences in people.” History has shown that people of diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds often find themselves in conflict. We lack a certain civility when it comes to interacting with people who are different. Frequently, disagreements lead to shootings, beatings, destruction of public and private property, and to a lesser degree name-calling. All these should have lead us all to cry out against a society bent on self-destruction.

At Atlantic City High School we have a unique opportunity to not only to just get along but also to understand that in our differences, we are still basically alike. However, this understanding takes continuing dialogue. People have to work through understanding to grasp hold of how diverseness brings together the ideal of one world. Schools are most peoples first service organizations. The nature of service organizations is that they are designed to present a congenial attitude to all persons who are fortunate enough to cross its’ threshold. They are also designed to put their best foot forward to meet ant greet in a most hospitable way all the “clients” who use them. If the school raises its clients to believe in the certainty of morals, ethics, and principles along with the

precept of reaping and sowing then we shall have a string legacy to pass on to the next and succeeding generations of students who pass through our hollowed halls.

Once accepted by all parties with vested interests in the future, A World of Difference could mean the difference between success and failure in the environment of the future. Our students would go out into the world ready to address the wrongs imposed upon their world by preceding generations.

A statement that was made by one of my colleagues, which will soon be released for publication states, "In the school, we have developed a tolerance for each other because of our wide diversity. Our wide diversity has required that high school to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) to our students. In many homes, English is not the primary language of the family. In our community, ethnic neighborhoods have evolved with businesses that cater solely to that particular ethnic population." What happens to people when they venture out of their neighborhoods? How comfortable do they feel? How assertive? How confident are they in their ability to function as they define themselves apart from race, creed, or national origin. Those same persons are required to learn English and American customs. How much have Americans, as a whole, ventured into other people's worlds just to "find out" how they think or feel? How many Artists from other cultures have Americans as a whole become familiar with? Are we to go through the rest of our lives having only developed a "tolerance" for someone who is different than ourselves? When we go home, what kind of world do we truly live in? Is that world a lie, a trumped up fabrication of some politically correct statement, or are we truly "walking the talk."

This program will offer Atlantic City High School an opportunity to institute a policy of discovery. The discovery that we truly have nothing to fear from another as long as

we are willing to be honest in letting those persons into our lives, and then making a faithful attempt to understand the nature, customs, and habits of others who are different from us. It could truly make a world of difference.

Organization of the Study:

Focus of the following chapters;

Chapter 2—Review of the Literature: Diversity is not a new subject. As a result of recent violence in schools and in the workplace, thinking people have realized the need to explore the possibility of diversity training in the environment in which they live and work. The literature review will focus on the various aspects of this emerging subject, how it has been implemented in various places in our society, and how effective it has been. The intern wishes to explore the impact this training in diversity has had on schools, community, and business. Through the study of the literature a framework for the success of the implemented program established at Atlantic City High School could be developed there by guaranteeing a better than fair chance of succeeding.

Chapter 3—The Design of the Study: The focus of the design is to study and eliminate bias. Participants will be drawn at random from the population at the school. Volunteers are necessary to the design of the study thereby avoiding the problem that may be caused by assigning personnel to various positions. There are six aspects to the program. The intern foresees only one confounding effect. No one group will be asked to participate in more than one phase of the program. However, there will be a need to have the same teaching staff member or other adult act in a dual capacity; that of steering committee member and/or diversity team member.

This aspect could pose a problem if there are not sufficient persons to function in all the necessary roles. Time constraints could affect the extraneous variables. The intern has little or no control over the pace of the six parts of the program. Changes of assisting personnel from the designers of the program or the schools administration could hamper the smooth flow and continuity of the program.

Chapter 4—Presentation of the Research Findings: The focus of this chapter will be to begin the reporting procedure for the Board of Education. Since the Board of Education has paid the required fees and given their approval to the overall success of this program, the intern is assured that they will want a report on the outcome of this work. No matter the outcome, the report filed by the intern will reflect the results and be critical in its overall evaluation.

Chapter 5—Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study: The focus of this chapter will be to correlate the results and send them off to the Anti-Defamation League's A World of Difference Program for their records and that of our benefactor.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The study of diversity is the study of history. As we study history, we begin to understand that the world is indeed a small place and that life is even smaller. Too much time has been wasted on the focused differences in the society in which we live. Wars have been fought to prove what? People's lives have been altered greatly because of racial differences. This, in the intern's opinion, provides grounds for the question, "What purpose has been served?"

In her narrative, Debra Viadero, March 1999, At the Crossroads Education Week on the Web <http://www.edweek.org/ew/1999/28genera.h18> recounts events concerning the inhabitants of Prince Edward County in Virginia, 1954, just after the Supreme Court struck down segregation, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. She states, "Rather than bend to the will of the federal court as the other communities involved in the legal fight eventually did, Prince Edward County closed its public schools—and kept them padlocked for five long years." The article centered on families and their struggle to hold onto their homes and heritage. The author's account of how these people survived that ordeal and the pains they endured sheds some light on how far people are willing to go to maintain the "statue quo."

The author spoke of young black children who had to travel to relatives who owned a business and were in turn picked up by a white teacher who took them with her to her school. "If you were to listen to everyone from that time, they'd have a different story, and it's like a quilt. To each person in their lives, it meant something different, and we all know quilts are handed down from family to family. They mean something," remarked Penny Hackett one of the interviewees.

The author goes on to recount that, "In many cases, white students, too, were victims of the school closings. In September of 1959, the white community had established Prince Edward Academy, a private school system extensive enough to serve some 1,500 white children." Bob Smith, They Closed Their Schools, 1965 ME Forrester. This author speaks of some white students who attended classes in the basement of a church and some who were bussed to make shift classrooms in stores and homes throughout the county. Many of the ardent supporters of these ad hoc schools were against desegregation and claimed that this fight was about states' rights, not equal rights. In 1964 the Supreme Court ruled, in the case of Griffin v. Board of Education, that the public school had to be reopened.

Did the battle end there? Did the segregationists concede, and mend the errors of their ways? Will they ever give up, surrender completely to the idea of a "Union?"

Today, Prince Edward County is a thriving community. It has schools that are models of excellence for the rest of the country. These grandchildren and great-grand children of the Confederacy have with assistance, built a fine school system. But as Ms. Viadero adds, "Symbols of the old south still remain for everyone to see." The Battle Flag of the Confederate States still waves proudly all across the South.

Business has also helped shape the trend toward diversity training. It too has had its share of battles, but now the trend (at least on paper) is to view, and "empower" there employees. Business espouses the view that each employee brings to the job a uniqueness that when harnessed will increase the bottom line for that company.

In its manual, Managing Diversity, The Market wise Corporation <http://www.the-interloop.com/top6.htm> a diversity training company states that, "Understanding the source of differences helps create a better environment for all of us. As we approach a global

economy, interaction between the vast diversity of employees is constantly increasing. In both our professional and our personal life, valuing and maximizing the potential of all humans is a must.” The workshop proposes to review, explore, help, and give positive techniques to increase acceptance and awareness.

Likewise, the East Point Corporation <http://eastpt.com/divers.htm> another diversity training company has a program, which is based on understanding the dynamics of difference. They focus on issues of opportunity, productivity, and changing organizational systems. They seek to understand patterns and structures that affect behavior, which deflects from the bottom line.

Diversity encompasses all differences: gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, culture, ethnicity, geography, socio-economic class, physical ability, work habits, practice area office site, and level in the organization. Their program stresses that, “By recognizing the facets of diversity which highlight similarities as well as differences, potential backlash is minimized. The business implications of diversity are developed for each client, underscoring the uniqueness of the particular organization. We seek to understand patterns and structures that affect behavior and deflect from the bottom line. Three major outcomes of diversity work have been: increased responsiveness to clients, reduced tensions among divisions, locations and levels, and retention of key women and minorities in the organization. By looking thoughtfully at internal systems through a diversity lens we can begin to understand whether and by what means particular systems might benefit from change. How do the formal and informal systems work? How might current systems for recruitment, job assignment, evaluation and advising be strengthened to integrate more thoroughly the best practice of diversity? Strategies for change grow from understanding these systems.”

This straightforward approach provides some principles, which can be used in any situation where diversity training is undertaken. Several programs, which have been modified to meet the needs of children, are in place to bolster the multiplicity of diversity that is encompassed in our schools.

One such program, Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center <http://www.SPLCENTER.org/splc.html> is a national education project offering free, high-quality educational materials to teachers to help promote interracial and intercultural harmony in the classroom and beyond. Teach Tolerance arose in 1991 in response to the increase in violent hate crimes. It is designed to promote the acceptance of diversity, peacemaking, community service, curriculum development or other aspects of tolerance education. The program is built on a “study circle” format. Participants, once they are settled, are asked to develop rules that help the deliberation process along. Once this is done, the trained circle leaders enliven the conversations, by allowing the topics to veer, twist, and turn, to go where they go, always keeping the focus on race relations.

The idea is not to try to solve the ills of the world, but “to develop for one another a degree of empathy from which constructive relationships can be forged.” It was noted by the manual that some of the established groups had positive and creative ventures develop as a result of their training sessions. Some of those results were neighborhood watches, school improvement plans, and one Springfield, Ill. group emerged from their sessions to create a Kid’s Café, a restaurant and recreational center. In all these sessions, the most fundamental change of all was the change in consciousness of the participants.

Lucia Smith May, 1999, True Diversity, Education Week on the Web <http://edweek.org/ew/1999/35smith.h18> wrote that a proposal was written for her school to join with several other schools in similar population areas to explore ways of “exploring

the gap” in test scores. This she states was a sure way to keep racial percentages in the news. “I am all in favor of sharing information and raising academic performance, but there is an unacknowledged danger in this “all race, all the time” education identity. By concentrating on racial and ethnic categories, my school, like many others, is ignoring the many other differences that give it its real diversity. Diversity is not just racial. It’s not just social. It’s not just economic. It doesn’t only have to do with family income or how long a person has been in this country. It also has to do with how hard a person works and what he or she wants in life. The 2,814 students who are my schoolmates have a wide range of ambitions. Some want to get into top colleges. Some just want to get out of Saturday detentions. Some dream of becoming a sports hero or famous actors. Some hope that they can earn enough money at after-school jobs to help support their families.” The author, now a senior at Evanston Township High School in Evanston, Ill., sums up her argument by saying that true diversity is ambition or the lack of it. Doesn’t that make sense?

People bring with them into any situation the sum total of everything they and the generations which came before them are, have experienced, have shared, and have learned. They bring their history. History is what makes them who they are. In most cases, that history can be changed when given the right circumstance to change it. We are defined by the history we choose to expose to others and mostly to ourselves. The only purpose that has been served is the purpose we have defined for ourselves. As a result of negative thinking, lies have been perpetuated for so long that we have begun to believe them. That is why it is so important that the history we define ourselves within is the history we make collectively. Histories we make can ill afford to exclude anyone, ignore any possibility, slight any attempt, or discourage any positive thought. Denying one of these, denies ones-self.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

“What type of evidence can be gathered to prove that the A World of Difference Program is having an impact on bias reduction, if indeed bias does exist at Atlantic City High School?”

This qualitative research is being conducted to begin to light any bias that exist in this city’s multiculturally diverse population, starting first in segregated neighborhoods, and then spilling over into the most diverse school in the city, Atlantic City High School. The study is being conducted in a natural setting, with the only non-manipulated variable that of participation. The same persons, either student or professional/support staff, must serve dual roles when the six various phased begin. As a result of the above-mentioned condition, the results of the data gathered by the research from its inception to its final evaluation must be flexible and tolerance in the organizational structure of the program must be considered a part of the process.

Atlantic City High School was chosen because of its vast ethnic diversity. The school’s administrators invited the ADL to institute an anti-bias program in the school to counter-act the escalating tensions between various cultural backgrounds along with violent acts committed by students. Children and adults of all nationalities, religions, and creeds are housed here. The school receives students from four sending districts as well as students whose parents are residents of the city. The workforce that makes up the bulk of the city’s residents moved there seeking employment. These same persons are the service force for the casino industry. For the most part they are economically challenged. The outlying communities are comprised of persons who are middle-class or well to do. A socio-economic class system exist which keeps the neighborhoods segregated.

When reviewing bias in the city and the school’s ethnic diversity we need to determine the extent of the bias, and if it creates intolerance in the goals and interactions of

the residents and students of the city? Do students bring with them, the bias' of their parents? Have they developed biases on their own? Can these biases be uncovered and properly dealt with by this program? Will the adult population, which is in the schools, allow this process to take place?

Development Description and Design of the Instrument

The Anti-Defamation League respectfully requested a two-year grant of \$530,783 from the Capital Group Companies, Inc. to underwrite an innovative program to remedy student violence—Stop the Hate—in three cities across the United States where both Capital Group and The ADL have a strong presence: Atlanta, Los Angeles, and New York. In 1966, the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Division of the United States Department of Education encouraged the ADL, based on the league's experience and reputation in the areas of hate crime prevention and diversity education, to design a program that could measurably decrease the violence plaguing our nation's schools. The ADL's response was to create a pilot program, entitled Stop the Hate, in four high school complexes across the country, including Los Angeles and New York. The department acknowledged the efficacy of the plan and awarded \$210,000 in seed money to test the program.

The purpose for this two-year study is to provide intervention and hate crime training for administrators, diversity training for teachers, and involvement for parents and community leaders, and most significantly, peer leadership for students. Using an on going process, which will raise students' self-esteem, resulting in them becoming role models for their peers and younger students. While teaching life-long coping and conflict resolution skills, the program motivates certain youth groups to persevere and respond positively in the

face of prejudice and discrimination, and sensitizes other youth groups to the harm caused by prejudice and discrimination. At this stage in the research, the primary source for reaching the students is through the programs anti-bias guides. These are supplemental lesson plans designed to lead students into an understanding of hate crimes and prejudice. They have been prepared for educators to use with grades 9-12. The material provides teachers with lessons that encourage students to explore, examine, improve and take leadership roles in promoting justice and equality in their schools, communities and society at large. The material in the study guide fits most easily into a Social Studies and English curriculum; however, it is also connected to other disciplines as well. The guide has six units with eight lessons per unit.

All the information is based on need. What do the students and staff need when it comes to diversity training? Are there problems in the school that need this comprehensive a program? The needs assessment is designed to measure the perceived need. All the parts described in the above paragraph are designed to meet perceived problems, which make up a multiculturally, socio-economically diverse population.

Sampling and Sampling Techniques

The New Jersey Project calls for a needs assessment to be sent to all staff at the high school. This needs assessment is created in the form of a questionnaire. Attached to the questionnaire is a cover letter which explains that the design of the program is to help develop respect for cultural diversity and acceptance of cultural differences, including anti-prejudice educational initiatives.

The questionnaire seeks to discover the knowledge the participants have ranging from expectations of diversity training, to how many culturally diverse populations are in the

school. The questionnaires ask about the perception, duties, responsibilities and possibilities of training in the building, and the impact that training would have on the school's culture. The questionnaire has a total of ten questions; two scaled questions, eight open-ended questions.

Data Collection Plan

Each questionnaire will be sent to staff members at the high school only, requesting that they fill them out as quickly as possible and return them. Each house, or pod, has a specific number of teachers; therefore, enough questionnaires will be delivered to the house secretary. At the end of the week, the surveys will be returned to the designated school administrator or mailed directly back to the ADL (address listed at the bottom of the questionnaire).

Data Analysis Plan

When the questionnaires are returned, the results will be tallied. The results of this base line data will be used to further assess the program and the directions in which it should precede. The program needs participants that will commit themselves to see it through to the end. Without that commitment, little or no success will follow. That participation is the ultimate goal of the project.

Chapter 4

Results of the Study

The following information is the result from the survey given to the teaching staff at Atlantic City High School. The Anti-Defamation Leagues A World of Difference Program conducted the survey as a needs-assessment before the introduction of its program scheduled to begin in September.

The teaching staff at Atlantic City High School totals 140. Of that number, only twenty-six (26) responses were received, equaling 22.5% of the professional staff. Surveys were distributed early in June, giving the respondents enough time to complete them before an inordinate amount of time had lapsed. Having three pods or houses the respondents were asked to return the surveys to their respective office's, where they would be picked up. If staff wished, however, they could mail their responses directly to the Anti-Defamation League. Either way, the surveys were to be returned by June 18, 1999, a period of two weeks.

The respondents were not classified by gender. No names were attached to the results. There was no special designations, numbers, or marks to determine where the responses came from. Staff members could only anticipate what the results of the survey would be, because no other mention to any projects or future endeavors were mentioned with the exception of the History/Social Studies teachers. They originally were contacted by the Anti-Defamation League to pilot the program.

Teachers were asked about the demographics of the individuals with the school community. The demographics included racial, religious, gender country of origin, and the sexual orientation of the population of the school. Many of the respondents tried to ascertain the percentage of students/ staff of the various ethnic backgrounds represented in

the school. The consensus ranged from 60-65% Afro-American, 15% Asian, 15% Latin American, 10% Caucasians of which the majority of the teaching staff is comprised. Persons of Eastern European origins and Afro-Caribbean Islanders as well as Jews were unknown. Each of the groups represented are significant in number. The respondents in nineteen surveys reported this question using what seemed all persons. Three persons spoke of students only, and two went unanswered. Two responses stated that that information should be on file. It is concluded that of the number of responses given, not too much attention was given to the "kind and number" of culturally diverse populations represented in this facility, only that there are differences.

The respondents felt that the schools greatest strength in regards to multicultural diversity was its great ethnic breakdown. Only one respondent had any multicultural training, and it just happened to be from the one that the district had chosen to institute, the A World of Difference Program.

Respondents were asked list the priorities on which they wished to build their existing skills. The most overwhelming response, 74% said they needed tools with which students can build knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of diversity. 65% want to create an educational community where students, staff, and families of different backgrounds could work together successfully. 48.5% stated that parents should be involved in the schools effort to address diversity. At 46%, learning to appreciate, understand and work cooperatively with students, staff or families who talk differently was. 43.5% of the respondents checked that the curriculum needed to be expanded to include multicultural resources and that the school should avoid adverse publicity and lawsuits. 39.5% stated that they wanted to learn how to respond to incidents of prejudice and discrimination within the school community. 37% stated that they wanted to develop the skills to take personal action

to combat prejudice and injustice. 25% of the respondents said they wanted to develop the skill to put their values about cultural diversity into practice. Innately these twenty-six people want to do and learn all they can about how best to precede. From the answers given, they all seem eager to participate.

When the respondents were asked what they needed in terms of materials, in-service training, etc.—to better address the increasing needs of the diverse society, the respondents requested in-service training and a variety of materials to help everybody take a look at their own bias, and prejudices. Some of the answers were geared toward personal desires, while five went unanswered.

The frustrations listed by the respondents were combined and are: Apathy in that that Afro-American educators think prejudice is a one way street, a lack of understanding (educational or social is unclear) by various ethnic groups, a lack of incident reporting, a vehicle for turning negative experiences into positive ones, the “sandbox” effect you play in your corner and I’ll play in mine, sexual harassment, misleading and handling of group situations and stereotyping, preoccupation with this subject, denial, sending students for training, teaching Non-English speaking students in a traditional English speaking classroom.

Respondents were asked to respond to a series of numbered items that looked at possible issues that may indicate a need for diversity awareness and action on the part of the school as a whole, and skill development on the part of the staff. Insensitive language (sexist or racist etc.), outbreaks of anger, violence and vandalism, name calling, possible inequity within the school disciplinary system, and the lack of training or resources to deal with diversity were the major issues listed.

The remainder of the questions, the last three, went unanswered.

In summary, the respondents in the beginning of the survey seemed to have a desire to participate in a multicultural program. The responses that were given gave the appearance that the persons answering them had a concern for the changing climate that prevails in this facility. However, as the survey went on, there seemed to be a shift in the way the answers were given. The answers seemed not as sincere as they once were. The answers seemed geared more to some selfish motive than to a need to explore true diversity. Perhaps, it is the bias of the respondents, which carry their answers, or the fact that they developed a negative attitude towards the survey, became tired of the questions, and just responded in kind. Perhaps, the answers given at the beginning of the survey were made to order, scripted to accommodate what is perceived as the right thing to say. Perhaps not. Perhaps the program is needed more than originally thought. Perhaps, the bias of staff runs deeper than even they care to admit. In any case, the individual bias of the respondents seemed to come forward. The responses were few in number, which alludes to the fact that apathy not only runs deep among the Afro-American staff as was mentioned, but also the entire staff in general. A short survey, the length of which was ten questions, the hope was to generate some interest in the vastness of the diverse population of the school and for the teaching staff to take some kind of action. As a result of the 77.5% who chose not to respond to the survey it shows that more effort was given to bringing the program to the city's school than could be counted on to participate. From the numbers alone, the program more than likely should have been cancelled.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Studies

Conducted as a qualitative research, the study was conducted to bring to light any bias, which may exist in Atlantic City High School's multiculturally diverse population. The study is being conducted in a natural setting, with the only non-manipulated variable that of participation. The same persons, either student or professional/support staff, must serve dual roles when the six various phases begin. As a result of the above-mentioned condition, the results of the data gathered by the research from its inception to its final evaluation must be flexible and tolerance in the organizational structure of the program must be considered a part of the process.

The needs assessment only produced a representative portion of the entire staff's population, 22.5%. From the workshop given, two committees were initially established. First, was the steering committee and the second was a diversity team. The two committees worked independently of each other. The second phrase of development was to train administrators and other staff members who were to be directly or remotely involved with the program to go through their own sensitivity training. The third phase was peer development training for students. The forth step was to infect the stakeholders with the vision. The last and final phase was to bring some wholeness to all the groups and their interactions.

The vision, goal, and frameworks of the program were clearly written. How to implement them was not. Not having answers to specific questions and a clear understanding of how to reach those goals also hampered the process. Most of the staff remained reluctant to take a position or dedicate themselves to the work. Staff persons relate that they reach diversity and tolerance in their own classes. The just did not want to

teach diversity lessons as they apply to a curriculum guide furnished by some outside agency. To get the task done, they just have to want to do it. Teachers would have to take a journey through their won souls, gain a thorough understanding of the guidebook, and infuse that understanding with the district's and the state's curriculum guidelines. The lessons would have to be taught and then discussed with a sincere belief that something worthwhile could be developed as a result of the sustained collaborative effort each person brings to the table. Since the classroom is "the domain of the teacher" the teacher would be the only one who would understand how to adopt and implement a new idea into an already overburdened schedule. The question is, "Will they?"

The intern concludes that it is this lack of independence in action that has held up the inauguration of the program. Until adopted, until the lessons are taught the whole program will flounder.

The intern concludes that the schools administration should be settled before any organizational or cultural change is initiated. The school is hampered by not having a well-placed administrative staff. At the time of the program's inception, the superintendent of schools was an interim person; three of the high schools administrators left the job, for various reasons, at the same time. The administrator who represented the ADL, and had successfully sold the idea of the program to a supervisor in the high school's Social Studies Department, who in turn sold it to the school board, resigned her position. The person who replaced her has a doctorate in sociology but no educational background and only limited experience with this program. The supervisor who originally accepted the challenge of this program was made a principal, shipped across town to another school, and was unable to participate in any way in the program. The teachers who inherited the position of administrators of the program were hampered by the top-down bureaucratic philosophy,

which is the present organizational structure the district work under. The team was not armed with enough information or power to launch any true campaign. From the beginning the steering committee struggled to define its own role in the greater content of the school's culture. The steering committee struggled to define its purpose, goals, and vision. These three needed to be kept in line with how the needs of the school were defined apart from the needs assessments, the directives presented in the guidebooks, and the districts curriculum. From the beginning there was reluctance from other staff members to get involved. Not having any clear direction of how to get them involved was critical to the inception of the program. With sheer will power the group forged ahead, apprehensively.

The intern concludes that much of the work needed to be done in schools is done by a few staff persons who themselves are overworked. The primary aim was to recruit new change agents, which would help to create something positive within the organizational structure of the building. The original plan was to establish a common basis for persons to work from and through, and to learn about and possibly change the Organizational Culture, Leadership Roles and Decision-Making methods of the school through group interactions. No leadership skills were developed, only frustration; the frustration borne of fear.

The intern concludes that a good idea has no weight or merit unless the vision is perceived and accepted by all. How is the vision (need) established? How do the persons who are asked to institute the program perceive the need? In this case, the unperceived need set the precedent. Many adults refused to understand that this project was more than a diversity program. It could possibly have become the vehicle whereby staff would be able to congeal as one, a way out of the perceived threat of a state take over, and a way for all to speak through a common language.

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Appendix A
Research Instrument

New Jersey Project

Atlantic City Needs—Assessment Questionnaire

The questionnaire is strictly confidential and only A World of Difference staff will see your reply. All schools are facing issues of changing demographics, biased media coverage, varied parental influence and the challenges all three bring into the school environment. The more in depth your answers, the more effectively we can facilitate our workshops. At the same time, we ask that you only fill in the answers you feel comfortable submitting. When you are finished, please either submit it in an envelope to Bruce Greenfield or return it to the address on the back of the form—either way by June 18th.

Your Position: _____

1. Please describe the demographics of the individuals within your schools' community—racial, religious, gender, country of origin, sexual orientation, etc. If you are unsure, any information about the demographics of the staff or students you work with will be helpful.

2. What are your schools strengths in regards to multicultural diversity?

3. What prior multicultural or diversity training have you received? When? Please describe?

4. Please check you five priorities, then circle the most important one:

I want to build on my existing skills to:

- ☐ Create an educational environment where students, staff and families of different backgrounds can work together successfully.
- ☐ Know how to put my values about cultural diversity into practice.
- ☐ Take personal action to combat prejudice and injustice.
- ☐ Expand the curriculum to include multicultural resources.
- ☐ Avoid situations where students, staff, or families are offended—avoid adverse publicity and or lawsuits directed at the school.
- ☐ Recruit more staff, students, or families from different backgrounds.
- ☐ Learn to appreciate, understand and work cooperatively with students, staff or families who talk and act differently.
- ☐ Involve parents in our efforts to address diversity.
- ☐ Respond to incidents of prejudice and discrimination within the school community.
- ☐ Provide the tools with which students can build knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of diversity.
- ☐ Other: _____

5. What do you need in terms of materials, in-service training, etc.—to better address the needs of your students who will live and work in an increasingly diverse society?

6. What are your biggest frustrations or concerns related to prejudice, discrimination, racism and other forms of bigotry in your school?

7. In looking at possible issues that may indicate a need for diversity awareness and action on the part of the school as a whole, and skill development in the part of the staff, please rate the following:

On the line before each item, indicate on a scale of 1 to 5, how critical the issue is:

1= non-existent

2= insignificant

3= noteworthy

4= important

5= urgent

___ Name-calling

___ Offensive slurs, jokes, stereotypic remarks

___ Insensitive language (sexist, racist, etc.)

___ Outbreaks of anger, violence or vandalism

___ Different treatment or expectations for students based on gender, race or other differences

___ Lack of training or resources to deal with diversity

___ Sexual Harassment

___ Confusion about how to communicate and work with people from other backgrounds

___ Homophobia

___ Possible inequity within the school disciplinary system

___ Anti-Semitism

___ Other: _____

Other: _____

8. What issues would you like to see addressed at future diversity educational training sessions? Which should be addressed directly and which are symptomatic of other causes, which must be liked at first?
9. Please describe any current or ongoing organizational issues that may have an impact on diversity programs or interventions at your school?
10. What are your expectations for this workshop?

If you want to submit this on your own, please mail it to: Laurie Skop, Educational Coordinator, A World of Difference Institute ADL New Jersey Regional Office, 743 Northfield Avenue, West Orange, New Jersey 07052

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