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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS DAY PROGRAM

by
Anne-Sophie I. Kruse-Guth

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
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Approved by
Professor

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ABSTRACT

Anne-Sophie I. Kruse-Guth
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS DAY PROGRAM
2004/2005
Dr. David H. Moyer
Master of Arts in School Administration

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a Multicultural Awareness Day program on improving student understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures. The study was based on a quantitative analysis research design. The sample used for this study included 7th and 8th grade students at Glassboro Intermediate School in the Glassboro Public Schools District of New Jersey. A randomly selected sample of seventh and eighth grade social studies students participated in the study. One technique, surveying, was used as a means for data collection. The data were analyzed both before and after implementing the Multicultural Awareness Day program. The analysis consisted of reviewing and coding the survey data. The major finding of this study was that the Multicultural Awareness Day program was effective. While the Multicultural Awareness Day program had a greater effect on the seventh grade student sample than it had on the eighth grade sample, the findings indicated that holding a Multicultural Awareness Day program would improve some students' understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

The intern began action research in an effort to improve multicultural awareness within Glassboro Public schools in Glassboro, New Jersey. In New Jersey, according to the New Jersey Department of Education Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCS) manual (1996), there were over one hundred ethnic groups and around one hundred and twenty-five different world languages being spoken at home. The student population and community were culturally diverse in Glassboro Public Schools. Yet, there were insufficient opportunities to explore this diversity within the given curriculum.

At Glassboro Intermediate School all 7th grade students learned Italian for one semester while all 8th grade students learned French for one semester. Before attending the Intermediate School, students learned the Spanish language one day a week at the elementary level. Considering the need in the state to prepare students to be sensitive to other cultures, the students at Glassboro Intermediate School were not adequately being prepared to work in such a diverse state and world. Their exposure to cultures within the history program and world language program was too minimal. Students were not achieving true cross-cultural understanding.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a Multicultural Awareness Day program on improving student understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures using a quantitative analysis research design. The intern wanted to determine how 7th and 8th grade students' understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and world cultures changed as a result of the Multicultural Awareness Day program. The study's results would be of use to Glassboro Intermediate School and any school which needs to better prepare its students for the global world in which they live. The study's results would be of value to researchers in the field of multicultural education.

The study addressed the following major question: How effective was the Multicultural Awareness Day program in improving student understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures? The study also addressed the following subquestions: How many students understand what it means to be multiculturally aware and how many students consider themselves more aware of the diversity of cultures within Glassboro and the community after experiencing the event? In order to improve Glassboro's multicultural education curriculum, the study resulted in a report given to the administrators of Glassboro Intermediate School that could be shared with the faculty, staff, and superintendent of Glassboro Public Schools.

Definitions of Important Terms

multicultural: many cultures (religious, ethnic, historical, language-based, racial, etc.)

awareness: recognition with understanding

world language: a term used in more recent years for languages from around the world other than English

foreign language: a term used, less often now, for languages that are new or different than English

NJCCS: the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards; a list of standards in New Jersey since 1996 that represent what all students should know within seven academic content areas

global: worldwide

culture: the traditions, languages, history, customs, dress, feelings, and ideas of a given group of people

ethnicity: a group of people that share a common background either historically or culturally

diversity: a great variety of different types of people

race: a means for categorizing people by their background (geographic or ethnic)

religion: the belief system of a group of people

respect: to recognize with admiration and honor

appreciation: an understanding of; positive thoughts toward something or someone

ISLLC: Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards; a group of standards created in 1996 and organized into knowledge, disposition, and performance areas for school leaders to follow

sensitivity: an awareness of cultures and their differences without judging them as right or wrong

responsive teacher: one who is sensitive to the different cultural feelings, beliefs, and attitudes of students in a classroom

Limitations of the Study

This study included 7th and 8th grade students at Glassboro Intermediate School in the Glassboro Public Schools District. One limitation for this study was that the intern used a small sample size of students experiencing the Multicultural Awareness Day program. While the entire student population experienced the event, only two classes were surveyed. Therefore, 40 students out of the estimated 400 total student population provided the data for the study. Another limitation of the study was the use of one technique, surveying, as a means for data collection.

Setting of the Study

The study took place within the comprehensive K-12 district of Glassboro, New Jersey. The district had five school buildings. There were approximately 2600 students in the Glassboro Public Schools. The study took place at Glassboro Intermediate School, the middle school which housed all 7th and 8th grade students in the district. There were approximately 400 students at the time of the study. There were approximately 34 teachers at Glassboro Intermediate School. According to the 2003 New Jersey School Report Card, 64.7% of the faculty possessed a Bachelor's degree while 35.3% had a Master's degree. There were no faculty members who had a PhD or EdD. The Intermediate School had a principal, assistant principal, and two guidance counselors. The school building dated back to 1929. The school, which was under construction, had been placed on a 1:00 pm dismissal schedule until the new cafeteria was finished. The students, therefore, did not have a lunch period. They had seven 42 minute periods of instruction and a 12 minute snack period. The classes were grouped heterogeneously. The school's curriculum was aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Glassboro Intermediate School was located in the town of Glassboro, New Jersey. Glassboro was a part of Gloucester County. According to the Web site City-Data.com, Glassboro was home to 19,068 people and its land area was merely 9.2 square miles. The racial background of its residents included 72.9% White Non-Hispanic, 19.5% Black, 3.8% Hispanic, 2.0% who are two or more races, 1.5% of other races, .6% American Indian, and .5% Asian. Four percent of Glassboro residents were foreign born. For employment in Glassboro, the educational, health, and social services industry provided 26.7% of the employment. Retail business represented 14.1% of the employment. Manufacturing accounted for 11.3% of employment and the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services represented 10.4% of the employment. Glassboro was home to Rowan University which had approximately 7500 students enrolled annually at the time of the study. When compared to the state of New Jersey's average, unemployment and the Black race population were significantly above state average in Glassboro. Also, the Hispanic race population, number of college students, and the Foreign-born population were above state average in Glassboro.

Significance of the Study

There was a need, according to the building principal at Glassboro Intermediate School, to increase harmony within the school culture by experiencing other cultures. The intern recognized within her own French classroom the need for students to increase their sensitivity to other cultures. Students claimed to know little about their own heritage and that of others. Furthermore, the NJCCS 6.5 stated that "...all students will acquire historical understanding of varying cultures throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world" (1996, p. 6-13). Standard 7.2 stated that "...all students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship between language

and culture for at least one world language in addition to English” (1996, p. 7-1).

Glassboro Intermediate School needed to provide further exposure to world cultures for its students in order to be able to achieve these standards.

Relationship of the Study to the ISLLC Standards

The intern recognized that the study directly corresponded to several Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. In ISLLC Standard 1 (1996), “...a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision that is shared and communicated by the school community.” Therefore, by implementing a new multicultural program and determining its effectiveness, the intern had clearly determined that as a future administrator she had knowledge and understanding of pluralism or multiculturalism (1.a.1).

Secondly, as ISLLC Standard 2 (1996) indicates, the study allowed the intern to act as an administrator that “promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.” Specifically, the study called for the intern to have the knowledge and understanding of diversity (2.a.6). Also, the focus of the study demonstrated the intern’s commitment to the importance of diversity (2.b.4). In addition, by implementing the Multicultural Awareness Day program and surveying students, the study ensured that there was human dignity and respect (2.c.1); all feel valued and important. The activities of the study also ensured “diversity in and multiple opportunities for learning experiences” (2.c.3). There was no better opportunity for the learners at Glassboro Intermediate than to experience the diversity of their school and community first-hand.

This study also addressed ISLLC Standard 4 (1996) in which “a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.” Every category underneath the knowledge, dispositions, and performances sections of Standard 4 was addressed by this study. In order to organize, plan, and run the Multicultural Awareness Day, the community was essential. A partnership with colleges, area businesses, families, students, and teachers was necessary in order to have enough speakers for the Glassboro students. These speakers were evidence of a great collaboration and communication between the school and the community.

Finally, the study embodied a few aspects of ISLLC Standard 5 (1996): “a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.” The intern within the study exhibited knowledge and understanding of the diverse school community (5.a.4). The intern also believed in, valued, and was committed to the diverse school community (5.b.3). The entire premise of the study called for the intern to engage in activities that ensured an appreciation and sensitivity for a diverse community (5.c.4).

Organization of the Study

As a world language teacher and future school administrator, the intern welcomed this opportunity for action research at Glassboro Intermediate School. The organization of the remainder of this study is as follows: Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive literature review and synthesis of the literature related to the study. Chapter 3 presents five sections related to the design of the study. The chapter begins with a general description of the research design used for the study. The second section focuses on the

research instruments used in the study. The third area addressed in this chapter is a description of the sample population and what sampling techniques were used by the intern. In the fourth part of this chapter the approach to data collection is presented. Chapter 3 concludes with an explanation of the data analysis plan. In Chapter 4 there is a presentation of research findings. In Chapter 5 conclusions are drawn, implications are addressed, and areas in need of further study are proposed. References and an Appendix will follow.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Changing Demographics in America

In the United States today a more diverse population is walking through the school door. "The U.S. Census Bureau (2000) estimated that people of color made up 28% of the nation's population in 2000, and predicted that they would make up 38% of the nation's population in 2025 and 47% in 2050" (Irvine, 2003, p. ix). There is an enormous increase in the number of immigrants entering the nation's schools as well. According to James A. Banks, a leading expert on multicultural education, classrooms in the United States are experiencing the biggest flood of immigrants since the turn of the 20th century. There were 7.5 million legal immigrants who came to the United States in the 1990's. The majority of these immigrants came from Latin America and Asia. In addition, every year we have an enormous influx of illegal immigrants who come to this nation. In 2001, forty percent of student enrollment in U.S. schools was considered students of color. Banks asserts that public schools in large cities such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles have more than fifty percent students of color.

In addition, our schools have seen an enormous change in the languages and religions of its students. The U.S. Census Bureau of 2000 (Irvine, 2003) reported that 16% of youth lived in a home where English was not the primary language. America is now also considered to be the most religiously diverse nation on earth (Irvine, 2003). Hodgkinson ("A research-based approach", 2004) predicted in 1997 that Asian, Hispanic, and Native American populations would increase rapidly while the African American

population would increase more slowly. Hodgkinson observed that only 17% of the 5.6 billion world population was White in 1997. He also predicted that by 2010 the number of White people in the world would drop to only 9%. As more immigrants are Latin American, Asian, and Middle Eastern, rather than European American, the intern recognizes that even the types of immigrants have changed in the United States. Furthermore as Hodgkinson explained in 1997, "...the United States is the first world nation in this history of the humanity where every nation in the world has a resident in this country" ("A research-based approach", 2004, p. 12). The faces of American students will clearly become even more diverse in the future.

The Need for Multicultural Education

"The nation's deepening ethnic texture, interracial tension and conflict, and the increasing percentage of students who speak a first language other than English make multicultural education imperative in the 21st century" (Irvine, 2003, p. ix). The No Child Left Behind Act's goal is to guarantee that all children have an opportunity to learn-regardless of income, background, or ethnic identity. This goal was made in an effort to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers (Ubben et al., 2004). Without administrators and teachers taking a closer look at the cultures of the new faces of our American students, the achievement gap among minority students will continue. "The achievement gap too often seen between students of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds in our schools makes it essential for educators to learn all they can about barriers to learning that some of their students experience" (Protheroe, 2004, p. 36). While children face other barriers to their learning, culture is one which administrators and teachers can address successfully.

Culture

The intern has defined culture as the traditions, languages, history, customs, dress, feelings, and ideas of a given person or group of people. Culture is the means by which people "...present themselves, understand the world, and interpret experiences"

(Protheroe, 2004, p. 36) The context of a child's culture can influence how the student learns, communicates, and understands his or her environment. When that environment becomes the classroom, children come through the door with very different experiences. Therefore, they represent diverse cultural backgrounds.

Sonia Nieto (1999), a Professor in the School of Education from the University of Massachusetts, asserts that culture represents a child's identity and directly corresponds with how he or she learns. Nieto asserts that "it is becoming increasingly indisputable that culture and cultural differences, including language, play a discernible although complicated role in learning" (1999, p. 48). Since culture plays a role in learning, then it is essential that schools address the cultures of its administrators, teachers, curriculum, and most importantly, its students.

Different Multicultural Education Approaches

With the increasing change in this nation's demographics and the knowledge that one's cultural identity influences one's learning, multicultural education becomes increasingly more important. If "No Child" is to be "Left Behind", the child's cultural identity must be considered when making changes. With the Multicultural Education Consensus Panel, James A. Banks helped to develop twelve essential principles for teaching and learning in a multicultural society. These principles include: professional development, equitable opportunities for learning and high standards, an understanding of the social construction of knowledge, relationships using co-curricular and extracurricular

activities, improving inter-group relations, understanding the effects of stereotypes and biases, learning about shared cultural values, social skills development, social interaction promotion, collaborative decision making, equitable funding, and assessment of learning (Higbee, Miksch, Jehangir, Lundell, Brunch, & Jiang, 2004, p. 63-64). The concept of multicultural education is treated differently by our nation's schools. It is this intern's opinion that developing a comprehensive multicultural education program requires the efforts of all members of a school community. Otherwise, the process of establishing a true multicultural education program becomes too challenging and only touches the surface of multiculturalism.

According to Sonia Nieto, the first approach to multicultural education seems like "little more than window dressing" (1999, p. xv). Schools display bulletin boards during Black History Month, Women's History Month, etc. While these efforts should be applauded, Nieto believes that these schools are only touching the surface of multiculturalism. But, perhaps, for some school districts, touching the surface of multiculturalism is a large step. Many schools have changed their holiday concerts to include more cultural music. Some districts make an effort to change the curriculum to include more multicultural literature. Teachers order new textbooks that visualize diversity or include cultures historically forgotten in older textbooks. In addition, many schools, based on the state's standards, mandate world language requirements and history courses about world cultures. But, simply studying about a culture can lead to inequities since not all members of a particular ethnic background share the same cultural identity. Yet, these changes are important progress for our schools.

Other schools are able to move a step further to address the diversity of today's classrooms. This level of multicultural education is marked by holding multicultural

events, assigning multicultural projects, and inviting multicultural speakers. The Multicultural Awareness Day Program that was held as part of this study serves as an example of this aspect of multicultural education. By including the family members of classmates and members of the community, students were not only able to learn, but also able to break down cultural barriers that exist in the school. Nieto argues: "Although multicultural education began as a reform movement with a powerful commitment to educational equity and an unequivocal stance against racism, in most places it is implemented as curriculum and practices that are little more than ethnic additives or cultural celebrations" (p. xvi). The intern respectfully disagrees with Nieto's views on the value of cultural celebrations. It is the intern's opinion that such celebrations are necessary events that schools need to make further progress toward multicultural awareness. While there is a need to have cultural events that celebrate diversity, there is also an immense need for school leaders to ensure that all educators teach with a culturally responsive perspective.

Culturally Sensitive and Responsive Teachers

Since there is no teaching method that works effectively with all students, culturally sensitive teachers are needed to transform schools into true multicultural institutions. The majority of teachers in this nation are white while the increasing majority of students are students of color.

In 2001, the National Education Association (NEA) reported that among k-12 new teachers 7% were African American, 1% were Asian American, 4% were Hispanic, .5% were Indian, and 85% were White. Many programs have been implemented across the country to recruit from underrepresented population to counteract these imbalances in the corps of future educators. (Alston, 2004, p. 81-82)

But, we can not depend on simply recruiting more minorities in order to make our schools more multicultural. Teachers, regardless of their ethnic background, are needed to become culturally sensitive educators. A teacher who is culturally sensitive is basically a teacher that values self-assessment. “It takes standing back and consciously reflecting on the way you teach—then asking whether your approach is successful with all your students” (Protheroe, 2004, p. 36). Protheroe explains that the idea behind culturally responsive teaching is to view a child’s cultural background as a tool to improve learning.

Every child’s cultural background should be thought of as a positive means of improving learning. In this way, teachers can “...diversify their instruction in response to individual students’ interests, personalities, and abilities—taking into account their differences in culture while not ignoring their need to learn skills necessary for success in the larger community” (Protheroe, 2004, p. 37). Children should be taught as individuals. Even if they share a common ethnic background, the students’ frame of reference will be unique.

Protheroe maintains that “While information about cultural characteristics is critical to the process of making classrooms more culturally sensitive, a caution is also in order: It is still essential to regard every student as an individual” (p. 37). According to Bhargava, Hawley, Scott, Stein, & Phelps (2004) education teacher preparation programs at universities must help teachers to both understand diversity and give them opportunities to teach in diverse settings.

Teachers also need to recognize the role culture plays in their own lives. Teachers can not expect to explore the cultural identities of their students without having examined their own cultural identity. “Teacher educators have a responsibility to challenge pre-service and practicing teachers to explore the role culture plays in their own lives before we can expect them to appreciate the role culture plays in the lives of their students” (Lindsey, 2004, p. 9). Teachers are in a position to create multicultural lesson plans, write multicultural curriculum, and engage in collaborative multicultural teaching. “As the nation’s demographics change and grow, integrating multiculturalism in developmental curricula is essential” (Bruch, Jehangir, Jacobs, & Ghere, 2004, p. 18). The ideal method of using such a curriculum is through creating a multicultural learning community.

When students see teachers working hand in hand, learning becomes more meaningful. “Imbedded in the discussion of centrality of multiculturalism in developmental education is the role and need of a sense of community for all students (Boyer 1990)” (Bruch et al., 2004, p. 19). Geneva Gay, a Professor of Education and Associate of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, argues that building communities of learning is essential for underachieving students of color. She asserts that African, Asian, Latino, and Native American students will achieve

better when learning is guided by their cultural contexts. Gay believes teachers should act as cultural mediators. "...Teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in critical dialogue about conflicts among cultures and to analyze inconsistencies between mainstream cultural ideals/realities and those of different cultural systems" (2000, p. 43). Gay (2000) asserts that teachers can help students through writing or discussion to understand their own ethnic background and respect other cultures while avoiding prejudice and racism. Gay also contends that if culture is a means with which children interpret the world, then teachers must use their own culture and that of their students' in order to create better learning opportunities.

Multicultural School Leaders

Teachers will not be as successful in creating multicultural learning communities if their school administrators do not have a firm understanding of the need for multicultural education. "For effective schooling in the 21st century, school administrators must be attuned to the complexities of changing demographics as well as the needs of those persons who have been traditionally excluded from the core of educational reform (Capper, 1993)" (Alston, 2004, p. 79). Judy Alston asserts that all members of the school work force need to be on board with regards to multicultural reform.

Teachers, principals, and other administrators, as well as those who teach in educational administration university programs can develop a working model for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students if they are willing to cross the borders of racism, sexism, and classism in order to reach the land of effective schooling. (Alston, 2004, p. 83)

School administrators must encourage collaboration among faculty and staff. They must also allow teachers the opportunity to develop comprehensive multicultural education curriculums. "In short multicultural education seeks to embrace, recognize, and incorporate a multitude of diverse cultural experiences and contributions into the curriculum. Multicultural education thereby provides a vehicle for teaching citizenship to students" (Jones, 2004, p. 60). School leaders must serve as a model by establishing a multicultural environment that helps children to not only learn, but become good citizens.

Synthesis of the Literature

"All of the advanced cultural nations can be defined as multicultural insofar as they are more culturally diverse than they once were" (Kivisto, 2002, p. 187). The changing demographics in America are having a profound effect on our schools. The amount of immigrants in America has increased dramatically. "Given the tendency of the newcomers to settle in a select number of states, including California, New York, New Jersey, Texas, Florida, and Illinois, their presence is especially felt in these parts of the country" (Kivisto & Rundblad, 2000, p. 313). The need for multicultural education, in New Jersey especially, is clear. As a nation "...we must find better ways to embrace cultural diversity that is the world today" (Hampton & Gullota, 2004, p. x). Geneva Gay (2003) maintains that teachers are important in determining the kind of education today's diverse student population receives. Through culturally responsive teaching and leadership that exemplifies multiculturalism, all children will be able to become successful learners and respectful citizens. "More specifically, cultural, racial, economic, linguistic, and other "borders" must be crossed to ensure that the ever-changing demographics of public schools are considered in efforts to create effective centers of learning that facilitate the academic success of all students" (Alston, 2004, p. 79).

CHAPTER 3

The Design of the Study

Description of the Research Design

This study focused around the Multicultural Awareness Day program held at Glassboro Intermediate School. In order to determine whether the program was effective, the intern conducted research both before and after implementing this new program at Glassboro Intermediate School. The process of planning the Multicultural program and gathering speakers took over four months. During this time, the intern made arrangements with the two social studies teachers at Glassboro Intermediate School to use their classes for participation in the study of this program's effectiveness. In late October of 2004, the intern surveyed a randomly selected sample of seventh and eighth grade social studies students about their current understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world cultures.

Meanwhile, the intern continued to plan the Multicultural Awareness Day program for December 17, 2004. Speakers in the form of parents, business owners, teachers, college professors, and members of cultural organizations were gathered by the intern. A flyer explaining the program and a letter with directions were mailed to all presenters. The program consisted of approximately 20 presenters from various cultures presenting stories, discussion, music, activities, traditions, and/or food of their particular cultural background. The intern found presenters in the Glassboro community and beyond. Students signed up to travel to two different cultures. The week following the

Multicultural Awareness Day program, the same sample of students filled out the survey a second time about their new understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures. The results of the student surveys were analyzed and compared.

Focus on Research Instruments

The research instrument used in this study was a survey intended to provide quantitative data. The survey was entitled "Multicultural Awareness Survey". (Appendix) The research instrument was designed so that the directions and questions were comprehensive but easy to follow for the respondents. The directions for the instrument indicated that the students should not put their name on the survey. The directions also indicated that the respondents should only circle one number following each statement. The instrument contained 18 questions. A rating scale, similar to a Likert scale, was used on the survey. The scale contained the following choices: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The intern designed the survey beginning with general to specific questions concerning multiculturalism. The questions were worded so that the same survey could be administered a second time for comparative data.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The intern's sampling technique was based on using a segment of the student population that had experienced the Multicultural Awareness Day program. Simple random sampling of two social studies classrooms was used for the study. The intern met with Glassboro Intermediate School's two social studies teachers in early October of 2004 in order to select the sample for this study. The intern explained to the teachers that a sample of seventh and eighth grade students was needed for the study. The intern then randomly selected one seventh grade class from one social studies teacher and one eighth

grade class from the other social studies teacher. On October 8, 2004 the intern visited both classrooms to distribute consent forms to the students. Once the students turned in the signed consent forms, 40 students participated in the first survey. The survey was first administered on October 27, 2004 to both classes. All 20 seventh grade students and all 20 eighth grade students who had turned in consent forms completed the survey. Therefore, 40 total students formed the sample for the initial survey.

Two months later these two classrooms and the rest of the student body signed up to travel to two different cultures on Multicultural Awareness Day. The program, held on December 17, 2004, included the entire student population at the Glassboro Intermediate School. Then, on Tuesday, December 21, 2004 both social studies classrooms used in the initial sample were administered the survey instrument for the second time. All students from the first sample were present on this date as well. Therefore, the sample was identical for both administrations of the survey. In this way, the quantitative data collected from both surveys were reliable.

Data Collection Approach

The quantitative data collected from this sample of students were needed in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Multicultural Awareness Day program on improving student understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures. The intern collected data in the form of surveys on two occasions. The intern surveyed students early in the school year before experiencing the program. Also, the intern surveyed students the week following the program so that the experience of the Multicultural Awareness Day program was still fresh on their minds. The survey was the same for both administrations in order to provide the intern with comparative data. The surveys provided quantitative data for the study.

Data Analysis Plan

The data were analyzed at two points during the project in order to determine the effectiveness of the Multicultural Awareness Day program. The data were analyzed after the first administration of the survey in October. Then, the new data were analyzed after the second administration of the survey in December. Data were analyzed as a whole at the end of the project in order to draw conclusions. The analysis consisted of reviewing and coding the survey data. In order to examine the data more closely, the intern also made use of the SPSS predictive analytics computer software program. With SPSS and the intern's own analysis of the coded surveys, the intern was able to conclude how effective the Multicultural Awareness Day program was on improving student understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures. The analysis of the data was represented in various charts in order to illustrate the effect of the Multicultural Awareness Day program.

Evidence Gathered to Prove that the Project had an Impact

The intern was able to gather an overabundance of evidence during the 2004-2005 school year that indicated whether this project had an impact on Glassboro Intermediate School. Before the event, teachers, simply by hearing about the program, addressed multiculturalism in all of their classes. Language arts teachers had students write in their journals about their experiences and even write some essays relating to the Multicultural Awareness Day program. Multiculturalism became a vehicle for writing across the curriculum. The Library and Media Specialist jumped on board in September and began a beautiful multicultural display in the media center for all to see. The Library and Media Specialist also displayed literature relating to cultures and languages in the library for the students and faculty. Many teachers, the school's head custodian, and staff members

aided the intern in finding speakers for the Multicultural Awareness Day program.

Respecting someone's race, ethnic background, religious affiliation, and language/cultural differences became a central theme in anti-bullying lessons, discipline conferences, guidance conferences, and classroom lessons.

The intern connected with so many members of the community to implement this new program. As a result, the project impacted more than Glassboro Intermediate School. The Gloucester County Cultural and Heritage Commission, the Camden County Cultural and Heritage Commission, Wheaton Village, Rowan University, Camden County College, Gloucester County College, the American Hungarian Foundation, Bangkok City Restaurant, La Esperanza Restaurant, the Philippine South Jersey Group, other cultural societies, area churches, schools, parents, and more either participated directly in the program or referred the intern to other resources for finding speakers. Two teachers from Glassboro Intermediate School even volunteered to speak about their own cultural background for the program. The principal ordered an enormous world map for the main hallway to be put on display throughout the year. The day of the event and following the program teachers and students discussed the program and their feelings about languages, cultures, etc. Following the program, the intern was able to converse with the speakers and learn what their perceptions were of the students' experience visiting their respective cultures. The program's impact was seen in the media as well. Upon hearing about the project, the school district's public relations director arranged for the local media to cover the program. As a result, the Multicultural Awareness Day program and the students, faculty, staff, and twenty speakers at Glassboro Intermediate School were highlighted in the following newspapers: "The Courier-Post" and "The Plain Dealer".

Most importantly, the most credible evidence of the project's impact on improving student understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures was the daily interactions of students with each other, the faculty, the staff, and larger community. The principal and Assistant Principal have agreed that since the beginning of the project to its completion that there was more harmony and respect within the school building. They believe that this evidence, while not based on reliable data, represented the most visible sign of the project's impact on Glassboro Intermediate School.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation of Research Findings

Introduction

The intern found that researching the effectiveness of the Multicultural Awareness Day program at Glassboro Intermediate School provided informative quantitative results. The results of the intern's study come from students' responses on the survey instrument. The outcome of the research was organized in this chapter based on what information was found and what the information meant for Glassboro Intermediate School.

What Information was Found

The intern examined how effective the Multicultural Awareness Day program was in improving student understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures by focusing on the results of several items found on the survey instrument. The most critical question on the survey instrument that addressed the research question was whether the children understood their own multicultural background. By comparing the students' understanding of their own multicultural background (Figure 1) both before and after experiencing the Multicultural Awareness Day program, the intern was able to see the program's effectiveness.

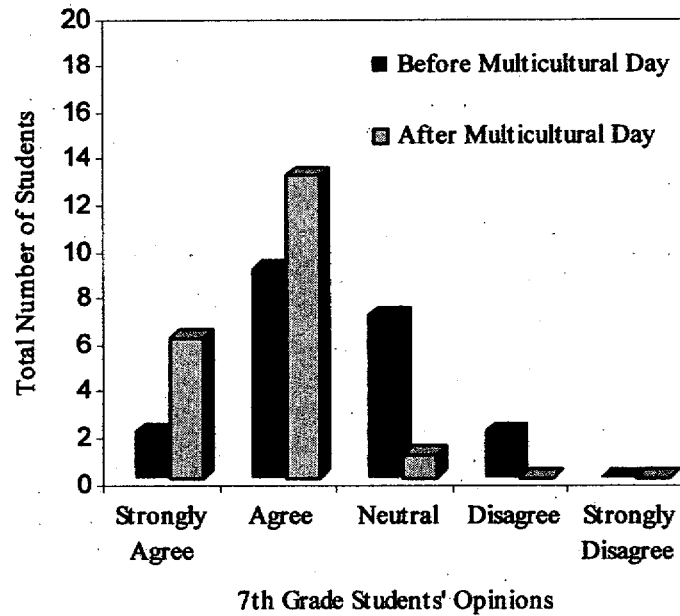


Figure 1. Seventh grade students' opinions of the following statement: "I understand my own multicultural background."

After experiencing the Multicultural Awareness Day, the majority of the sample of seventh grade students (Figure 1) indicated that they understood their own multicultural background. There were 11 out of 20 students who initially agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Therefore, 55% of the 7th grade sample agreed or strongly agreed. Following the event, 19 out of 20 students, or 95%, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The amount of seventh grade students who understood their own multicultural background increased by 40% following the Multicultural Awareness Day experience.

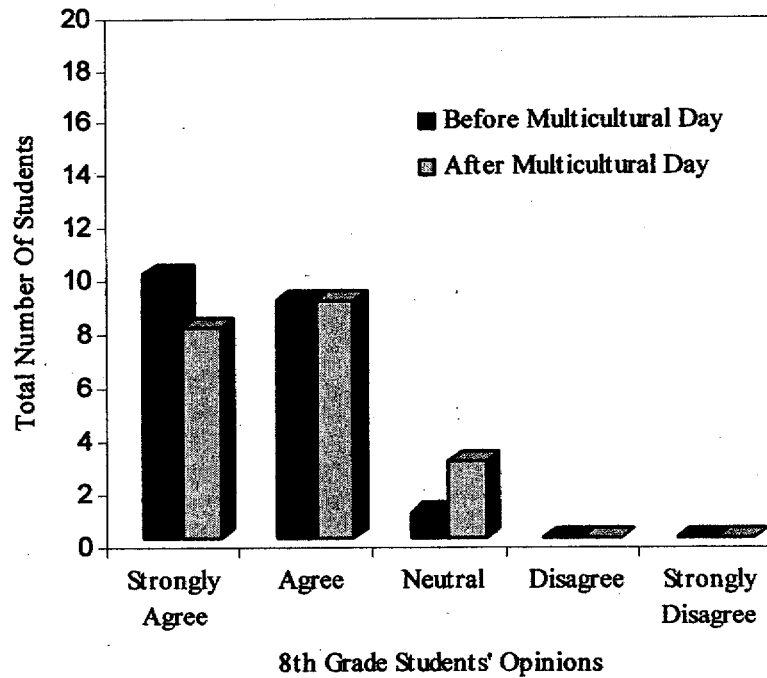


Figure 2. Eighth grade students' opinions of the following statement: "I understand my own multicultural background."

Unlike the seventh grade students, the eighth grade students' understanding of their own multicultural background did not increase (Figure 2) after the Multicultural Awareness Day program. More students were neutral with regard to understanding their multicultural background. In addition, the amount of students who strongly agreed when asked about understanding their multicultural background decreased. The percentage of eighth students who agreed that they understood their own multicultural background remained unchanged at 45%.

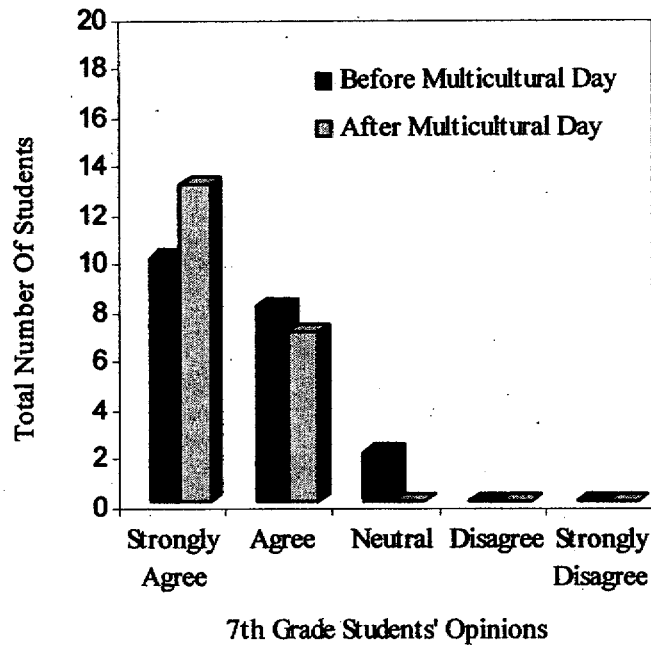


Figure 3. Seventh grade students' opinions of the following statement: "I appreciate my own multicultural background."

Again, the sample of seventh grade students indicated an increase (Figure 3) in their appreciation of their multicultural background after experiencing the program. The total amount of students who strongly agreed that they appreciate their multicultural background increased by five students. Therefore, a 30% increase in the seventh grade students' appreciation of their multicultural background was noted following Multicultural Awareness Day.

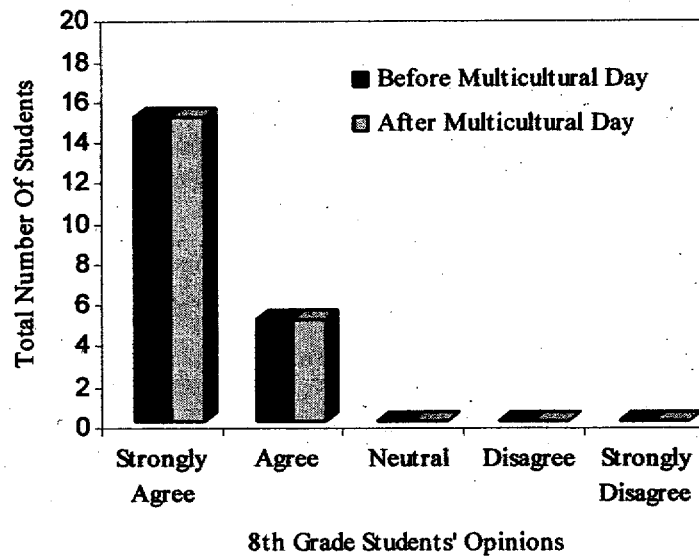


Figure 4. Eighth grade students' opinions of the following statement: "I appreciate my own multicultural background."

There was no change in the eighth grade students' perceptions (Figure 4). Their appreciation of their own multicultural background was not changed by experiencing the Multicultural Awareness Day program. The same percentage of eighth grade students, 75%, appreciated their own background both before and after the event.

The intern believed that examining the students' appreciation of others' multicultural backgrounds was imperative in determining the effectiveness of the Multicultural Awareness Day. Consequently, the intern focused on the results of this statement found on the survey instrument. The number of seventh grade students wanting to know more about the multicultural background of others increased (Figure 5) from 11 to 15. Therefore, 75% of the seventh grade sample was more curious about others' multicultural backgrounds after experiencing Multicultural Awareness Day.

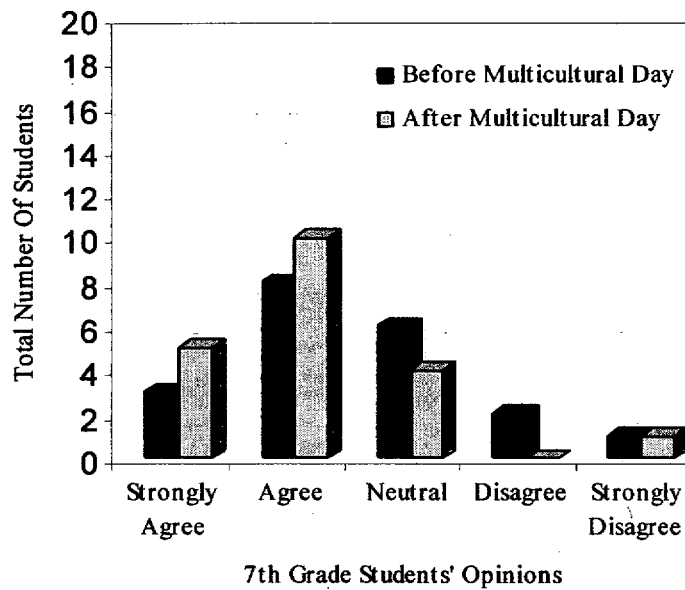


Figure 5. Seventh grade students' opinions of the following statement: "I want to know more about the multicultural background of others."

Unlike the seventh grade students, the amount of eighth grade students wanting to know more about the multicultural background of others decreased after Multicultural Awareness Day (Figure 6). While 13 eighth grade students strongly agreed and agreed with the statement, only 11 eighth grade students had the same opinion following the program.

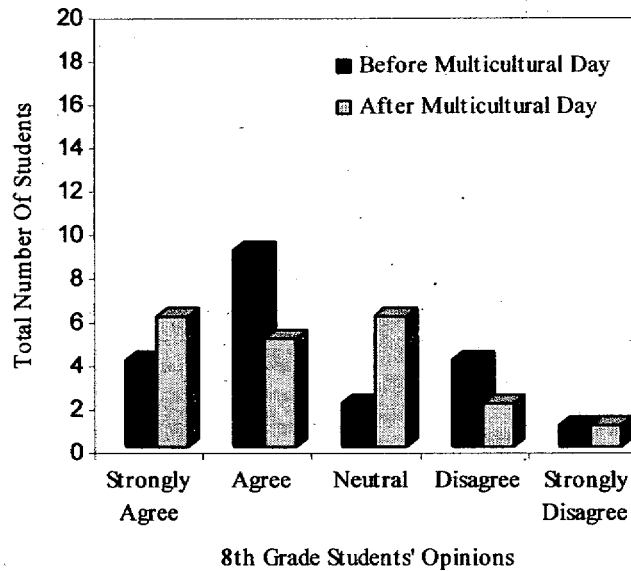


Figure 6. Eighth grade students' opinions of the following statement: "I want to know more about the multicultural background of others."

In order to address the intern's first subquestion of the study, the intern focused on the survey question regarding students' understanding of what it means to be multiculturally aware. In response to the first research subquestion, only eight students initially understood what it meant to be multiculturally aware (Figure 7). Following the Multicultural Awareness Day program, 17 out of 20 seventh grade students understood the concept.

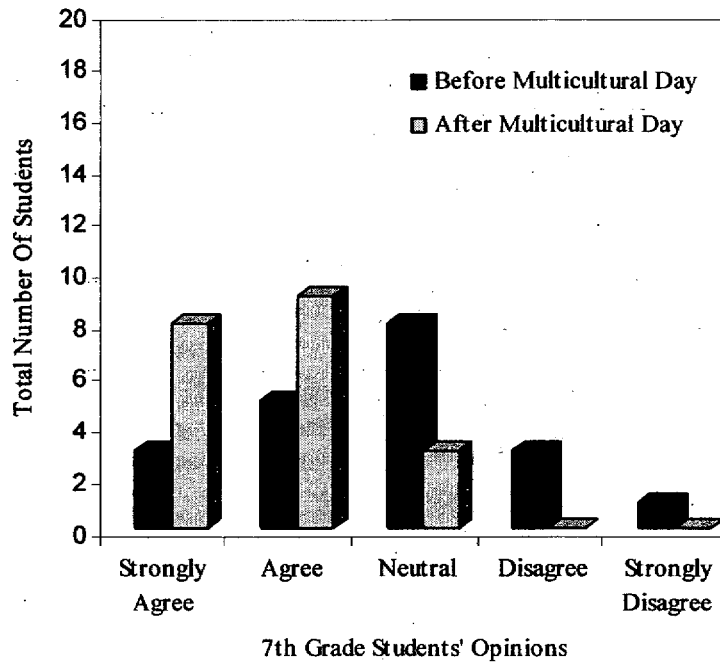


Figure 7. Seventh grade students' opinions of the following statement: "I understand what it means to be multiculturally aware."

There was a slight change before and after the program between the number of eighth grade students (Figure 8) understanding what it meant to be multiculturally aware. The total number of students who understood the concept increased from 10 to 15. Both seventh and eighth grade students' understanding of what it means to be multiculturally aware increased following the program.

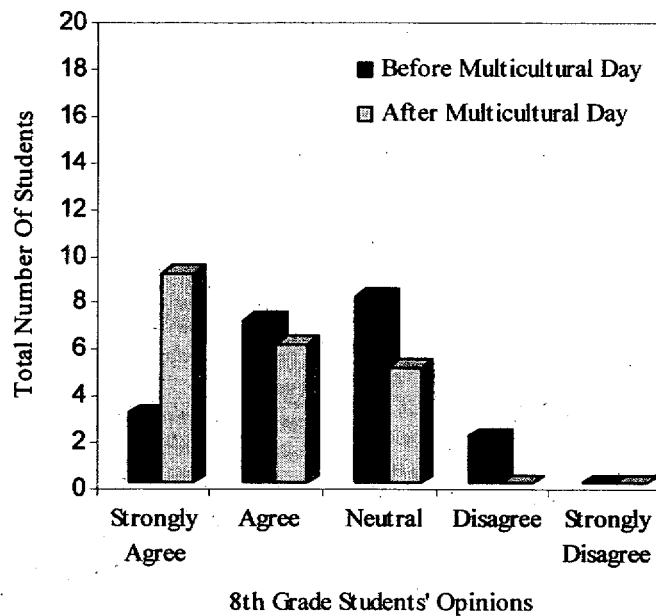


Figure 8. Eighth grade students' opinions of the following statement: "I understand what it means to be multiculturally aware."

An ideal evaluation of the Multicultural Awareness Day program's effectiveness was examining the intern's second subquestion: How many students consider themselves more aware of the diversity of cultures within Glassboro and the community after experiencing the event? The intern first focused again on the seventh grade students' perceptions (Figure 9). After listening to the speakers on Multicultural Awareness Day, the seventh grade students were more aware of the diversity of cultures within Glassboro and southern New Jersey. The total number of students increased from 15 to 18 following the program.

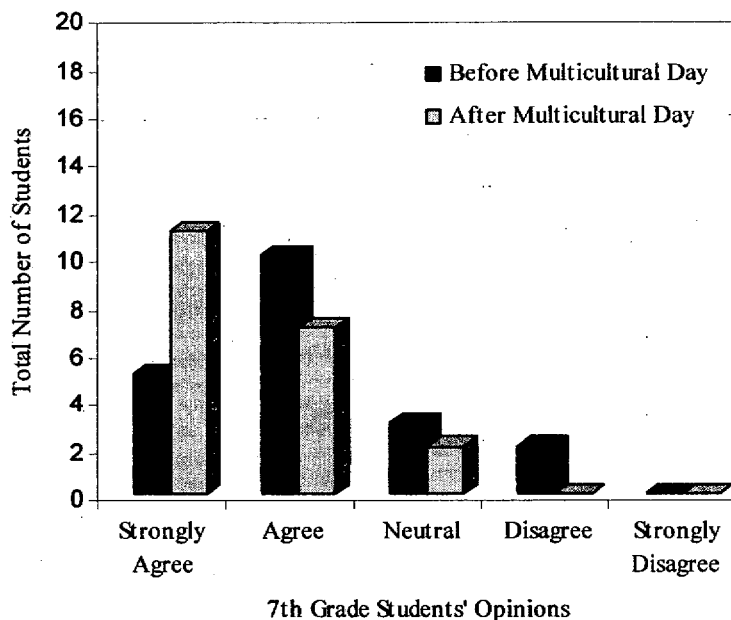


Figure 9. Seventh grade students' opinions of the following statement: "I am aware of the diversity of cultures within Glassboro and southern New Jersey."

After meeting the speakers on Multicultural Awareness Day, the eighth grade students (Figure 10) were more aware of the diversity of cultures within Glassboro and southern New Jersey. Two more students out of the eighth grade sample were made aware of the diversity of cultures. Therefore, 16 total students out of the 20 eighth grade students were aware.

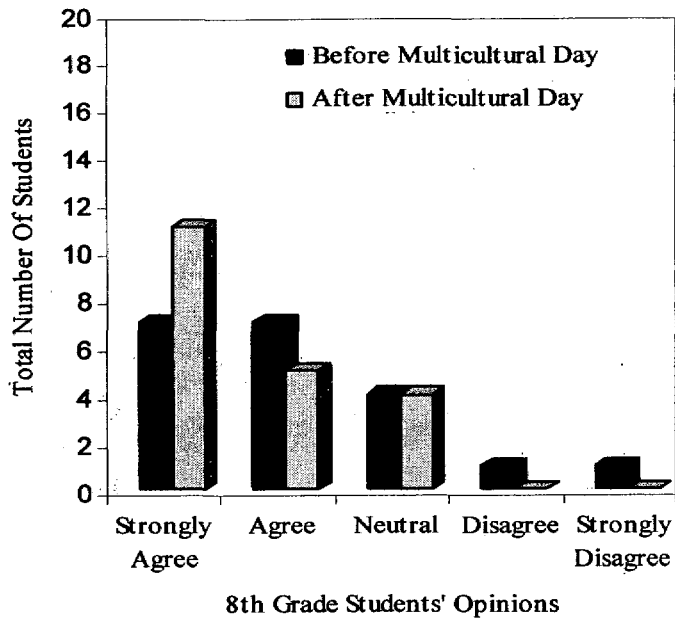


Figure 10. Eighth grade students' opinions of the following statement: "I am aware of the diversity of cultures within Glassboro and southern New Jersey."

What the Information Meant

Overall, the results of this study meant that the Multicultural Awareness Day program at Glassboro Intermediate School was effective. The degree to which the program was effective was determined by the data. The data were based on the perceptions of the seventh and eighth grade student sample selected for the study. The Multicultural Awareness Day program had a greater effect on the seventh grade student sample than it had on the eighth grade sample. The intern found that the amount of seventh grade students who understood their own multicultural background and that of others significantly increased following Multicultural Awareness Day. In addition, the seventh grade students' awareness and appreciation of the diversity of cultures in Glassboro and southern New Jersey also increased.

On the other hand, the eighth grade student sample showed only a slight change following the Multicultural Awareness Day program. The eighth grade sample did not show a change in their understanding or appreciation of their own multicultural background following the program. However, they did show a slight increase in their awareness of others' multicultural backgrounds in Glassboro and beyond. For Glassboro Intermediate School, the findings meant that holding a Multicultural Awareness Day program was worthwhile for the student population.

While, perhaps, the seventh grade was impacted more significantly by the program, there still was some change with the eighth grade's cultural awareness as well. Consequently, if most students increase their sensitivity and awareness to all cultures as a result of this program, the Intermediate School students would greatly benefit by continuing the program in the future.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

Introduction

The intern arrived at a few conclusions and their implications as a result of this study. The intern found that addressing the main research question and subquestions of the study allowed for a thorough presentation of all conclusions and implications. The main research question for this study was: How effective was the Multicultural Awareness Day program in improving student understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures?

The intern concluded that the Multicultural Awareness Day program at Glassboro Intermediate School was effective. The degree to which the program was effective was determined by the perceptions of the seventh and eighth grade student sample. The Multicultural Awareness Day program had a greater effect on the seventh grade student sample than it had on the eighth grade sample. The eighth grade student sample showed only a slight change following the Multicultural Awareness Day program. The eighth grade sample did not demonstrate a change in their understanding or appreciation of their own multicultural background following the program. However, the sample did show a slight increase in their awareness of others' multicultural backgrounds in Glassboro and beyond. The intern concluded that holding a Multicultural Awareness Day program at Glassboro Intermediate School was worthwhile for the students. This conclusion implied that future Multicultural Awareness Day programs would improve some students' understanding, awareness, and appreciation of world languages and cultures.

The first subquestion for the study was: How many students understand what it means to be multiculturally aware? The intern was also able to conclude that, as a result of the Multicultural Awareness Day program, many students understood what it meant to be multiculturally aware. Seventh grade students showed a significant change in their understanding of this concept. Following the Multicultural Awareness Day program, 17 out of 20 seventh grade students understood the concept. Half of the eighth grade students understood what it meant to be multiculturally aware before experiencing the program. Following the program, 15 out of 20 eighth grade students understood the concept. Therefore, both the seventh and eighth grade students' understanding of what it means to be multiculturally aware increased following the program. This conclusion implies that the Multicultural Awareness Day program successfully increased students' multicultural awareness.

The second subquestion for this study was: How many students consider themselves more aware of the diversity of cultures within Glassboro and the community after experiencing the event? The intern concluded that after experiencing Multicultural Awareness Day, the eighth grade students were more aware of the diversity of cultures within Glassboro and southern New Jersey. Two more students out of the eighth grade sample were made aware of the diversity of cultures. Therefore, 16 total students out of the 20 eighth grade students were aware. In addition, the intern found that the seventh grade students were also more aware of the diversity of cultures within Glassboro and southern New Jersey. The total number of students increased from 15 to 18 following the program. These conclusions imply that Glassboro Intermediate students and students from other schools can increase their awareness of southern New Jersey's diversity by experiencing similar programs.

The Study's Effect on the Intern's Leadership Growth

This study tremendously affected the intern's leadership growth per the dictums of the ISLLC Standards. First, the intern demonstrated within this study that she has knowledge and understanding of pluralism or multiculturalism (1.a.1). The intern demonstrated her understanding of multiculturalism by implementing the Multicultural Awareness Day program and determining its effectiveness.

By engaging in this study, the intern demonstrated that she has a great deal of knowledge and understanding of diversity (2.a.6). Also, the intern showed that she was committed to sharing the importance of diversity with the Glassboro Intermediate students and the surrounding community (2.b.4). The administration, faculty, and staff of Glassboro Intermediate School saw the importance of diversity as a result of the intern's efforts. They mirrored the intern's lead by encouraging school-wide activities that embraced diversity. Teachers did this by leading class discussion, journal writings, and essay writings related to multiculturalism. The activities of the study also ensured "diversity in and multiple opportunities for learning experiences" (2.c.3). By traveling to a few different cultures and engaging in classroom activities concerning multiculturalism, Glassboro Intermediate students were given multiple opportunities to learn. The intern learned that being a leader of a school means giving students a variety of approaches to learning.

As a result of this study, the intern realized how critical community involvement is when leading schools. As ISLLC Standard 4 (1996) states: "a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources." Without mobilizing the Glassboro community,

students would not have experienced as diverse of a Multicultural Awareness Day program. The intern was able to form a partnership with colleges, area businesses, families, students, and teachers in order to have enough speakers for the Glassboro students. The intern realized how important collaborating with the community is when leading a school.

Finally, planning a program such as Multicultural Awareness Day required that the intern learn how to schedule properly. As a leader, the intern realized how important planning (1.a.2) and being an organized leader is in order to have successful programs for students.

How the Study Changed the Organization

The study had a direct effect on the organization, Glassboro Intermediate School. The school's administrators, faculty, staff, and students enjoyed experiencing Multicultural Awareness Day and immediately began discussing ideas for next year. The fact that the school community was discussing Multicultural Awareness Day as an event that would occur year after year indicated to the intern that there was great value to this study. The intern recognized, by the school community's comments following the program, that the Multicultural Awareness Day program changed the school for the better. According to some of the teachers, students were more respectful and understanding as a whole towards other cultures. The intern found that developing an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of other cultures, was essential in order to create more harmony within Glassboro Intermediate School. Ultimately, the intern found that the effectiveness of the Multicultural Awareness Day program at Glassboro Intermediate School was apparent by the school community's desire to experience it again and again.

Further Study

The intern found a few areas for further study that might be beneficial to educators. First, the intern noted that a study of the effectiveness of a Multicultural Awareness Day program in which the majority of the speakers are students would be of interest to all schools. The results of such a study would be of interest to experts in the field of multicultural education as well. Secondly, the intern suggested that further research should be done as to what type of multicultural programs other schools have in place as part of their curriculum. In addition, an analysis of the effectiveness of these differing programs would be useful to educators and multicultural education experts alike. Furthermore, the intern recommended that a comparison study be conducted. The study would determine the effectiveness of a personal multicultural experience with one speaker format versus an assembly format with an entire school population. Such a study would also be of interest to educators and multiculturalism researchers.

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Appendix
Instrumentation

Multicultural Awareness Survey

Directions: The following is a survey being conducted on multicultural awareness. This survey is not for a grade. Your answers will be kept confidential. Only the group's results will be reported.

1) Please do *not* put your name on this survey.

2) Please *circle one* number following each statement.

The rating scale ranges from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree).

1) I understand what it means to be multiculturally aware.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2) I understand my own multicultural background.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3) I appreciate my own multicultural background.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4) I am aware of the diversity of cultures within Glassboro and southern New Jersey.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5) I want to know more about the multicultural background of others.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6) I believe my school helps me to have contact with other cultures through class or school-wide activities.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7) I am interested in the traditions and languages of other cultures.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8) I would like to speak another language fluently.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9) My family is prejudiced against certain racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10) My peers are prejudiced against certain racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11) I am prejudiced against certain racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12) I have friendships with people from different multicultural backgrounds than me.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13) I listen to music by artists who are multiculturally different from me.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

14) I watch movies/plays starring actors/actresses that are multiculturally different from me.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

15) I respect other cultures/ethnic backgrounds.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

16) I respect other racial backgrounds.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

17) I respect other religious backgrounds.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

18) I respect people in the Glassboro community who speak another language or dress differently due to their multicultural background.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

