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Implementation Issues in Multicultural Education: What Are Secondary Public School Educators Facing?

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ABSTRACT

This mixed method study sought to explore the issues that faced secondary teachers in a rural central Georgia public high school when attempting to implement a multicultural education program. The key issues of this study centered on the teachers' multicultural education training and the school's multicultural education program. Data were gathered from a total of thirty randomly chosen teachers in the Social Studies, Math and English departments at the school. Twenty-five of the thirty teachers received a hard copy four question Likert scale survey to complete. The remaining 5 participants took part in face-to-face interviews discussing six open-ended questions. The findings pointed to several issues facing the teachers such as the lack of an officially implemented multicultural education program, the lack of support from school administrators, no in-service training available for teachers, parental and student misapprehension, and a lack of an officially defined policy on implementation and support of a multicultural education program from administrators locally and district-wide.

Keywords: Multicultural education, secondary education, secondary teachers, multicultural education training.

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1.0 Introduction

Recent teacher education graduates begin their careers as classroom teachers in public schools with high hopes, high energy and quite possibly hopes of changing the world. However, some of these teachers begin to realize within the first few weeks of the school year, they weren't as prepared as they had originally thought and their plans for changing the world weren't going to be as easy or readily attainable as they once thought.

The problem? What hadn't their teacher education programs in college prepared them to do? Teachers were finding themselves at a loss to effectively teach students from diverse cultures that are far removed from their own culture. Bartolomé (2004) and Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman (2005) found "... even though most teacher education programs report that they have thoroughly incorporated diversity perspectives and multicultural content into the curriculum, external examinations often prove the contrary (As cited in Assaf, Garza & Battle). Premier and Miller (2010), stated, "it is crucial that pre-service teacher education courses address the issue of cultural diversity and expose pre-service teachers to multicultural issues in the classroom" (p. 38).

State standards in many school districts place pressure on many new teachers to focus on those mandates and even causes some to consider shelving multicultural education. Discrepancies in resources, facilities, and teachers also contribute to the challenges because the assumption is that all students have an equal opportunity to learn (Bohn and Sleeter, 2000). Some teachers are led to believe that a multicultural student population is equivalent to multicultural education. Teachers need to explore their own cultural filters and base knowledge if they shall be successful in providing Multicultural Education (Bohn and Sleeter, 2000). Bohn and Sleeter suggest, teacher workshops or in-service training cannot be a quick remedy or ban aid. Exploration of other groups and their Multicultural Programs and history of minority groups, and their intellectual work is necessary for a better of understanding of their diverse student population.

Many students in the general education classrooms speaking and writing in varying levels of the English language, as English is not the students' first language, teachers realize that they are failing to effectively reach these students. Struggling to find alternative ways to teach and evaluate their young scholars, these new teachers are exasperated with the challenge. Many of their colleagues face the same issues. These new teachers attempt to educate themselves on how to reach their students of many cultures and academic levels. It quickly becomes evident to these teachers that they have to begin to envision education in a different light. To successfully educate their students from many different cultures, "a change in cultural sensitivity is needed in order to effectively teach ethnically and culturally different students" as Banks (1993) had found in his research so long ago (as cited in Vincent & Torres). According to Patterson (2012), "It is essential to inform educators on the benefits of culturally responsive teaching with their students. Educators must be open to learning about their students and modifying their teaching to increase students' academic success" (p. 1).

So, how does one learn to become 'culturally sensitive' and 'culturally responsive' as well as integrate it into their classroom? In a study by Hyland (2009) the focus on predominantly white teachers in an African American school and community; students were allowed to become involved in examining issues identified in the classroom through community projects that allowed them to engage in project based learning. According to Vincent & Torres In a study involving agricultural educators in a rural community, students perceive their teacher's multicultural awareness according to teacher interaction with diverse students, and their everyday cultural practices, and community events. A students' self-image and motivation are closely tied to cultural pride and identity (2015). According to Brooks (2006), through family activities, community events, and religious ceremonies teachers can immerse themselves into cultures and attend community events that create a global mindset, and shows their multicultural competence.

Some possible avenues of assistance were few and expensive to attain. These opportunities consisted of seminars on an English as a Second Language (ESL) class that instructed educators on the various methods of how to work with the diverse students in the classroom to in-school professional development sessions for those educators interested in attaining more in-depth knowledge of this elusive topic that they urgently continued to pursue. Some teachers sought help from the ESL teachers in their school and district. If one were very fortunate, an ESL specialist from Brown University would sit in on the team's classes to evaluate and coach them in multicultural education issues.

Collectively, Multiculturalism should strive for both social awareness and social justice, but must be monitored and delivered with a strong purpose to avoid another interpretation that multicultural education is a hegemonic device promoting one dominant group (Garza & Crawford, 2005, p. 600). It is not just teaching students about other cultures, but connecting the gap of the curriculum to the lives of students, and identifying social inequalities, and improving the quality of life for the oppressed (Camp & Oesterreichs, 2010).

Though these efforts were a great start, time marches on, and these dedicated teachers began to see that the abbreviated measures they attempted to implement so far weren't really enough to help them effectively reach their students. There had to be more information, more training, more of "something" out there to help them reach their students. That something they were searching for, as they eventually discovered, was the implementation of a multicultural education program at their school.

Questions and concerns began to enter their minds: How does one even begin to implement just such a program? Were teachers in other school districts implementing this? What issues, if any, were they having? More specifically, what could be learned from their experiences? Interpreting academic excellence is always up for interpretation, but by most standards academic excellence involved cultural and social competencies that taught students, "to be effective members of their communities to contribute to productive social change (Lipman, 1995, p. 4).

The results of this study advanced the current body of knowledge regarding multicultural education implementation in secondary public schools. In addition, this information will be useful to new teachers, seasoned teachers, and administrators as they begin implementation of a multicultural education program in their school.

1.01 Purpose of the study

Many secondary teachers (experienced and veteran teachers) find themselves struggling to acquire effective ways to reach their students. The students' first language is not English, and their cultures are unfamiliar as well. This study sought to explore the experiences and issues that faced secondary teachers when they attempted to implement a multicultural education program in public schools. The research centered on what could be learned from these teachers' firsthand experiences and how to apply what was learned to help other teachers in similar situations.

2.0 Literature review

As the culturally diverse student population continues to grow in the United States, the need for implementation of multicultural educational programs in our public schools has also continued to increase. Recent census figures confirmed the growing student diversity in America's public schools. According to *The Condition of Education 2015, from 2002 to 2012*, the number of Asian/Pacific Islander students enrolled in public schools increased from 4 percent to 5 percent. It is projected by 2024; they will represent 6 percent of the total enrollment (p. 1-2). The report also stated in respect to Hispanic students, for this same period of 2002 to 2012, enrollment "increased from... 18 to 24 percent" and is projected to "represent 29 percent of total enrollment in 2024" (p. 1-2).

2.01 What exactly is multicultural education?

Now that the need for multicultural education has established, what is it and what can be said of it? "Multicultural education, by definition, originated during the 1960s as a response to the timeworn policy of assimilating the newcomers to this country into the melting pot of American society and culture" (Key, 1997, p. 2). More specifically, James A. Banks and Cherry McGee Banks (2013) described multicultural education in their book as being, "...at least three things: an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process" (p. 3). They continued on to state that as an idea, multicultural education sought to generate educational opportunities for all students of all races, irrespective of their socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, or cultural characteristics (p. 3).

According to Gollnick and Chinn (2013), multicultural education required educators to possess the viewpoints that are supportive of learning by children of all backgrounds. Dr. Sonia Nieto (2010) stated that the school is to provide students with the opportunity to learn via a quality education and that students are "capable and worthy of learning to high levels of achievement" (as cited in Gollnick and Chinn p. 359). Multicultural education changes the whole school environment so as to create equal educational opportunities for every student to mirror the various cultures and factions within the country's classrooms. "Multicultural education must be viewed as an ongoing process, and not as something that "we do" and thereby solve the problems that are the targets of multicultural educational reform" (Banks and McGee Banks, 2013, p. 4).

2.02 Reforming the curriculum

In education, it is common knowledge that changing the curriculum can be an arduous task. Kieran (as cited in Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013) hypothesized that, "when an institution of great complexity and importance, such as the school, becomes intricately bound up with nearly all other social institutions, attempting to bring about significant changes will meet a multitude of resistances" (p. 222 – 223).

With the advent of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), one would tend to naturally assume that multicultural education reforms within the curriculum would be a top priority. This has not been the path that has been taken. Studies revealed that multicultural education might be taking a back seat to state-mandated issues. As far back as 2000, Bohn and Sleeter hypothesized many states were adopting new state-mandated curriculum standards that "put pressure on school districts to standardize and emphasize content at the expense of any other concerns" (p. 158). Multicultural education is in jeopardy of being put on the back burner while educators are required to concentrate on other more important issues such as national and state standards and testing.

Wiley contended that, "there is no need for strict restrictions in the implementation of these programs....local educational agencies ought to be given the flexibility to choose the best language program for students, with input from all appropriate stakeholders, including parents, teachers, educational leaders, and the students themselves" (p. 285, as cited in McField, 2014). State standards that support multiculturalism have been found to regulate and control how multicultural education is classified and focused upon. According to Bohn and Sleeter (2000), depending on how precise and comprehensive, "a set of standards is, the less room it affords teacher or teacher educators to bring their own thinking or children's own experiences to the tasks of teaching and learning" (p. 157). This type of restriction does not allow for ample opportunities of free-flowing discussion or input from either the teacher or the students; therefore, stifling a possible teachable moment. Curriculum guidelines must be just that: guidelines that are adaptable. Diaz (1992) stated, "Many teachers will feel highly constrained by the existing curricular guidelines in their subjects. These guidelines may be viewed as limiting what could or should be taught in a subject rather than as minimum for course content" (p. 197).

The research has confirmed that when parents become more involved in their child's education, there is a greater likelihood of the child's learning dramatically improving (Banks and McGee Banks, 2013, p. 323). However, because of miscommunication, misinformation or lack of interest, parents as well as community members will oppose diversity within the curriculum. This issue can be, "particularly true if it

results in students learning material that was not part of their parents' academic experience" (Diaz, 1992, p. 199). Specifically, parents see no need for their child to be taught this information when they do not have knowledge of this type of material and they deem themselves successful people without comprehending this information.

Untold numbers of students with diverse cultures, languages, and viewpoints enter regular education teachers' classrooms every year. Unfortunately, numerous teachers, whether they are veterans, or fresh out of college, are uncertain how to teach to the diverse population of students currently enrolled in public schools. Many classroom teachers, "left their teacher preparation program with a little understanding of multicultural education typology" (Heurta, 1999, p. 150). These educators lack the training, "to teach any of these non-English speaking children, but are expected by the state to proceed with the regular curriculum as if these students will advance along with their American peers" (Bailey, 2001, p. 12).

Berlinger and Biddle's study indicated that when educators are not adequately prepared to meet these special needs of the students, the school district expects the teachers to attend in-service workshops or college classes to assist them in getting prepared. In this scenario, teachers state that they have two major issues: lack of extra money for the classes and lack of extra time to implement the innovations and ethnic content that they learn in these classes (as cited in Bailey, 2001).

Teaching about ethnic content can often be an issue of key concern for some teachers, especially if they have not been properly prepared for multicultural education. According to James A. Banks (1997), "many teachers, especially mainstream American teachers, may fear to teach ethnic content, particularly if their classes include students of color. This problem might be compounded if minority students in their classes express or show negative attitudes to learning about their cultural heritages, which sometimes happens (p. 528). Individuals contend, "White" teachers cannot nor should they teach about cultures in which they have no cultural connection. The cultures of African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics, and Asians could also intimidate educators. These naysayers contend that these, Caucasian teachers will never know what it is like to be a person of color. (Banks, 1997, p. 532).

Much of this fear Banks speaks of appears to stem from the inadequate teacher training in multicultural education. "The need for teachers to be intellectually competent before they embark on teaching ethnic content cannot be overemphasized" (Banks, 1997, p. 533). According to James A. Banks, teacher education programs for teachers in the 21st century necessitates inclusion of education for all teachers focusing on, "ways that will help them receive the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to work effectively with students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class groups" (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1995). Since the 21st century is already here, it very well could prove to be extraordinarily enlightening for teaching colleges, state boards of education and local school boards to listen to these prominent educators/researchers in the field of multicultural education.

3.0 Methodology

The study consisted of a mixed method research approach. The qualitative portion was an instrumental case study analysis format; the qualitative segment of the study consisted of a Likert Scale survey. McMillian (2012) stated of the mixed-method research design, "sometimes researchers use qualitative and/or analytical approaches and quantitative designs in the same study. By using multiple methods in a single study, the research is better able to match the approach to gathering and analyzing data with the research questions" (p. 15).

Typically, a case study is, "... an in-depth analysis of... one or more programs, social groups... individuals, or other "bounded systems" in a natural context (p. 279). Since this research focused on the study of individuals' worldviews, lived experiences, and concentrated on cultural groups in conjunction with a program of multicultural education, this path was considered the most applicable. In addition to the

direct interviews, a review of artifacts such as lesson plans and the district curriculums were reviewed for further analysis.

The quantitative segment of the study utilized a survey style questionnaire with a Likert rating scale. Schreiber and Asner-Self (2011) stated a Likert scale survey system is, "used to evaluate teachers, bosses, products, and so on..." (p. 108). Since the population in this study consisted of teachers and a "product" (multicultural education), the researcher deemed this method the best format to gather data from a larger number of individuals.

A series of six open-ended questions were designed for the individuals interviewed (See Appendix A). For the individuals that did not participate in the interviews, a three-question survey was disseminated to assess the individuals' beliefs about multicultural education implementation in their school (See Appendix B). The three-question survey consisted of two open-ended questions and one question with a four statement Likert-type scale. Once all of the data were gathered, the common themes/domains were analyzed and tabulated for data gathering purposes.

These qualitative and quantitative studies were conducted with the cooperation of twenty-five classroom teachers from a rural public high school in central Georgia. The research was carried out utilizing a triangulation of data: in-depth interview questions, teacher surveys and a compilation of artifacts (teacher lesson plans and curriculum). Interview and survey questions originated from Spradley's (1979) descriptive question matrix and described an object, act, actor, feeling, and event.

The assistant principal of the high school was notified of the rationale and type of study that was being carried out. Prior to the study being undertaken, the researcher attained permission from the assistant principal to perform this research study at his school.

Interviews of five classroom teachers were recorded in a quiet classroom and transcribed at a later date (Appendix A). The five teachers who were interviewed signed consent forms prior to the interview. Additionally, twenty surveys (Appendix B) were distributed to classroom teachers who were not interviewed and they also signed consent forms prior to filling out the surveys.

Teachers who were interviewed provided artifacts such as lesson plans and curriculum for their particular subject. Review of the artifacts presented by teachers allowed "an unobtrusive method, rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants..." (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 116). Artifacts confirmed numerous ideologies present in the completed surveys and taped interviews.

3.01 Population

The qualitative portion of the study consisted of a total of five teachers was randomly chosen from the Social Studies, English, and Math departments for participation in direct interviews by the researcher. These teachers had varying years of teaching experience from three years to twenty years and possessed Master's Degrees in Education. One teacher was African-American (male), two were Anglo (one female and one male) and two were Hispanic (both female). Questions posed to these five participants addressed areas of definition of multicultural education; description of the multicultural education program in their school; roles of individuals responsible for implementation; participants experience with the multicultural education program in their school; type of training each possessed in multicultural education; and advice to someone undertaking the implementation of a multicultural education program at a secondary public school.

For the quantitation portion of the study, twenty-five individuals were randomly chosen from the Social Studies, English, and Math departments just as the direct interviewees were. Since the surveys were distributed randomly, the teaching experience, education background, and gender were not available for the individuals participating in the survey portion of the research project. The surveys were

distributed to these individuals via their school mailbox. Of the twenty-five surveys distributed, eighteen (80%) were returned.

The high school, situated in a rural setting approximately thirty miles south of Atlanta, Georgia where the study was completed, had a population of approximately 1500 students. Of those 1500 students, approximately 95% were African American, two percent were Caucasian, and two percent were Hispanic and one percent Asian.

4.0 Results

Results of the in-depth interviews and surveys, the two methods of data collection were found to possess a small number of common domains. The domains of perspective/viewpoint, culture, and integration/incorporation appeared quite often throughout the data. Although the in-depth interviews allowed the teachers to expand on their theories, similar ideas were exemplified in a shorter format within the surveys.

The results of the four question Likert scale survey provided deeper insight into the concerns and beliefs teachers held about multicultural educational Results from the twenty written surveys, the research found the strongest showing of support came in at 56% for requiring student teachers to have multicultural education training incorporated into their teaching programs. Forty-four percent of the respondents were in support of in-service programs prior to the implementation of a multicultural education program. As for supporting the implementation of a multicultural education program at their school, 32% favored it. Forty percent of the respondents stated that their school had a well-planned and well-implemented multicultural education program already in place. For a more in-depth summary of the survey results, see Figure 1.

5.0 Discussion

Teachers, whether responding to the in-depth interviews or surveys, defined multicultural education, more often than not, within the domains of culture and perspective/viewpoint. CG, one of the five teachers interviewed, said that he believed it to be an incorporation of a "variety of cultural perspectives that address the ethnicity of the student population." LO, a teacher who responded to the survey defined it as, "The teaching of students of different cultures and teaching about different cultures." Most importantly, the consensus among the educators was that multicultural education dealt with the educating of all children of all cultures in the diverse perspectives that are held with the many distinct cultures existing in the world today.

The issue of the institution of a multicultural education program was apparently not as developed as it could or should be according to teachers' comments. AK one of the five teachers interviewed stated:

Holistically, I do not believe a "stated" multicultural education program is established in our school. Instead, certain curriculum requirements mandate that multiple perspectives become embraced (particularly in my field of Social Studies). We do, however, have cross-curricular programs in place, which does tend to facilitate projects embracing multicultural ideologies. For example, I worked on a cross-cultural project with the Art Department and Home Economics Department.

Of the teachers surveyed, half stated that they did not believe the school had a well-planned and well-implemented multicultural program at their school (see Figure 1).

Implementation of the school's "unofficially stated" (as several interviewees referred to it) multicultural education program ultimately fell to the individual classroom teachers. Although teachers attempting to abide by the curriculum that called for educators to assist young people in their development of the ability to make educated and coherent choices for the public's well-being as citizens of a civilization that

is culturally different, independent, and globally reliant, there was little implementation support from the administration at the school.

According to three of the five interviewed teachers, the administration at their school had minimal classroom experience prior to coming into administration and, therefore, had very little compassion for the teachers attempting to implement the multicultural perspectives in their classrooms. CG, one of the five teachers interviewed stated, "I see in this administration who supposedly is making this happen, don't have children...lack of empathy, we get the perspective that's so biased." AK, one of the five teachers interviewed, stated:

As an educator with a Master Degree background, I am professionally committed to implementing various perspectives within my own classroom practice. We do not receive in-service workshops on this topic. In our at-risk population, our powers that be tend to focus on seminars dealing with bringing up SAT scores. We have a 40% dropout rate at our school. Our administrators focus more on basic competency skills and skills that will directly transfer to the workforce beyond high school...Multicultural perspectives are gently woven into the undercurrents to promote empowerment and globalism to kids who consistently score below communities with more extensive resources and parental support...This school focuses on survival skills.

AK also recounted an incident where an administrator refused to allow her and the Home Economics teacher to hold a multicultural food festival this year. Although the food festival would have been a great experience for the students, the administrator was unhappy that the students were not buying lunch in the school cafeteria, thereby cutting into the free lunch program funds. Evidently, if the students aren't participating in the lunch program, the Federal Government notices it and funds will be cut to the school.

Teachers implementing their multicultural education program found the experience to be a positive one mostly. This was not to say that negative issues didn't arise because often times, they did and it was mainly because of a misapprehension on either the students' or parents' part. KB, one of the interviewees, was a coach at the high school and he shared an experience that exemplified some of the parental misunderstandings that arose occasionally with his sports programs. KB had started a program recently for the sport of cross-country. He said he wasn't trying to change the culture, but introduce the students to other sports and in the process, get the students cross-country scholarships to college. Parents of these students participating in this new sport of cross-country didn't understand how or believe their children could actually get a scholarship for this sport. As far as they were concerned, basketball and football were where the scholarships were; because that's the way it was when they were in high school. KB didn't give up when faced with parental doubts. He implemented the new sports program and after the first year, positive results ensued. His female cross-country team came in second in the region and his athletes received many scholarships for the wins.

AK, one of the interviewees, stated of her experience with implementing multicultural perspectives into her Social Studies classes to be a, "bittersweet experience." She infused her lessons with a variety of perspectives and cultures for her students to experience. One lesson she recounted, particularly, was pertaining to the pharaohs of Egypt and how Cleopatra wore wigs. AK explained to the students that the hairstyles many young African American females wear today were similar to Cleopatra's styles of centuries past. This peaked many students' interest. They began to ask what these people looked like. AK showed the students a variety of pictures and information from reliable sources illustrating the hairstyles of the day. The next day, AK was called down to her department head's office to explain this lesson. Evidently, a parent of one of AK's students called and was quite angry about this lesson. The parent accused AK of being racist. The student apparently misunderstood the lesson that was being taught and went home and told a different version of the lesson she had that day in class. Rumors of AK's purported racism abounded throughout the school in the following days and weeks. AK stated:

This was a very painful accusation. Why would I teach at a school where only two percent of the population had my features? I feel that the children come to my classroom with their own cultural experiences (for better or worse). Those experiences will affect how they view me as an instructor

transmitting knowledge through their own unique cultural lens. Fortunately, they are children and still have time to deprogram the hate and hurt that contributes to some jaded perception. Through my commitment and consistency, I hope to take them as far as they are willing to go.

Although both teachers in these examples could clear up the misconceptions, it was not easy to get either the parents or the children to look at the deeper meaning that the teacher was attempting to deliver. In the end, both educators felt that it was a positive learning experience for all concerned. They referred to these experiences as, "on the job training."

Formal training in multicultural education for the five teachers interviewed was minimal. Three of the five teachers acknowledged some form of training in this realm. CO and AK admitted to having attended classes in college that actually addressed multicultural issues. A third teacher, CG stated that he had taken two in-service training courses at the county level in the recent past. The other two teachers interviewed stated that they had not taken any type of formal training courses in multicultural education.

When interviewees, as well as survey respondents, were asked to advise someone who is undertaking the implementation of a multicultural education program in school, many had interesting theories how to go about doing so. Open communication, whether teaching it to students or using it to facilitate the implementation of the multicultural program was deemed one of the most important pieces of advice teachers mentioned. Communicating in an honest and frank manner was considered a vital component when attempting to incorporate a program where multiple perspectives and cultures are concerned. Additionally, teaching students how to communicate with people of different backgrounds was considered quite important for the students' future success as they go out into the workplace. KB, the coach who implemented cross-country at the high school, stated:

Overall, this is important for the future...communication...they have to communicate...if a person doesn't understand; they can't communicate that wisdom with another culture. So to me, that starts with education - an educator. The reason why people hate is because they don't understand the other culture. So they have to have communication skills of some sort and if they don't know how to work alongside other people, what's going to happen? They will be fired if they don't understand.

Another theory posed by many teachers participating in the written survey was to include numerous cultures in your content area. For example LO said, "Try to incorporate as many different cultures as possible content-wise. Try to open the kids' eyes to the fact that the world has more cultures in it than just ours in the U.S." KWB stated, "Education that should focus on the "total" not just a few cultures. Learning about cultures, integrating many cultures together, not teaching one culture per week." Ultimately, TSK said, "I feel all groups inclusive of faculty and students should be represented as well as the emphasis placed on knowledge of cultures not included in the population."

Interviewees cited the administration at the school as not being fully supportive of their efforts to implement a multicultural education program. They spoke of the lack of empathy and compassion for the teachers attempting to bring a multicultural educational program into the classrooms. Several teachers stated that administrators had very little classroom experience prior to taking the position of administrator and, therefore, did not fully grasp implementation issues the teachers were facing.

The second major issue teachers reported was a lack of multicultural education in-service training at the school. The courses that were offered at the school consisted of how to raise the SAT scores, teaching basic competency skills, and skills that will transfer to the everyday work world. Most of the teachers stated that they would like to receive training on multicultural education, as they felt they could benefit from the training.

Parental and student misapprehension was the third major issue teachers reported facing. Parents did not understand why educators at the school were teaching their children these issues, ideologies, and programs that multicultural education brought about. The parents were uncomfortable with these

different perspectives being taught; as this was something they had not heard of before and saw no reason why it should be taught to their children. Often times, the students and the parents were misinterpreting the message the teachers were attempting to get across while infusing their lessons with multicultural education material. Teachers stated that they spent many hours outside the classroom talking with parents in an attempt to justify the multicultural ideologies they were teaching in the classroom.

The lack of an officially defined policy pertaining to a multicultural education program was the fourth major issue teachers faced. Teachers stated that the curriculum calls for educators to assist the students in developing the ability to make knowledgeable and rational decisions that a citizen of a democratic and culturally diverse society would make. Nowhere does it state that a multicultural education program was to be implemented at the school. Teachers felt that an officially defined policy outlining a multicultural education program needed to be in place because of the diverse cultures attending the school and other county schools in the area.

6.0 Conclusion

This study investigated the issues that teachers faced when attempting to implement a multicultural education program at a high school located in rural setting thirty miles south of Atlanta, Georgia. Four major issues were identified by teachers participating in the study: lack of implementation support from the school's administration, no in-service training classes in multicultural education, parental and student miscomprehension, and a lack of an officially defined policy on a multicultural education program. Within this school, from reviewing the data results, this school has a deficient launch with multicultural education implementation. Much has yet to be done at this school to educate administration, faculty, students and parents about multicultural education, and the implementation of it, what it actually is, and what it can ultimately do for the future of our country.

This mixed method study was implemented at only one school, therefore it is difficult to generalize statements that pertain to the condition of multicultural education implementation overall in secondary public schools from this abbreviated data set alone. However, the data that has been generated raised several questions for a future qualitative research study. Questions such as: How can administrators be motivated to take a more active part in bringing multicultural education implementation into schools? How can students and their parents become more actively involved in this program? What types of in-service training need to be brought in for educators? What language needs to be written into the curriculums to support a multicultural education plan? How do we convince school administrator to appropriate the money to support this program?

Issues facing secondary teachers in multicultural education implementation are abundant, but not insurmountable, if solved as a group effort. The teachers interviewed envisioned implementation of a multicultural education program as a concerted effort by everyone affected by it –teachers, administrators, parents, and students. In essence, it should be everyone's responsibility to make a concentrated effort to take part in making it succeed. The results will benefit all of us, as we are educating a precious resource – our children.

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