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IMPLEMENTING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION TO FOSTER PEACE IN SCHOOLS

Francina Lethiwe Mazibuko [iD]
Corresponding author: Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa
Email: lethiwemazibuko04@gmail.com

Lucia Zithobile Ngidi [iD]
Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa
Email: lucian1@dut.ac.za

Abstract

The nation has witnessed an increasing migration in post-apartheid South Africa, significantly diversifying its societal fabric. This evolving multicultural landscape has noticeable instances of violence and necessitates a deeper awareness, understanding, and acceptance of the various cultures now present within communities. The rise in immigrant populations has underscored multicultural education's importance in fostering a peaceful, inclusive society. This study offers a unique and innovative exploration of whether multicultural education can contribute to peacebuilding and promote a worldview that embraces diversity within schools. The research delves into the critical need for multicultural education in South Africa's schools by utilizing focus groups and interviews conducted at an independent school in Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal. Pinetown has notable instances of school violence. The study further adopted action research to model the peacebuilding lessons that address the challenges posed by the country's diverse demographic landscape and the associated issues of violence, xenophobia, and tribalism. The findings of this study underscore the potential of multicultural education to drive a paradigm shift, empower learners, and positively influence social dynamics. By fostering cultural competence, encouraging parental and community involvement, and creating safe, inclusive spaces, this research provides valuable insights for educational authorities and schools. Ultimately, the study lays a foundation for the following researchers to explore various transformative roles of multicultural education in shaping a harmonious and diverse society.

Keywords: Multicultural Education, Education for Peace, Cultural Diversity, Integrative Theory of Peace

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades of democracy, South Africa has seen an increase in immigration worldwide, with the most considerable number of immigrants hailing from African countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, the DRC, Mozambique, and Nigeria. According to Moyo (2021), three-

quarters of South Africa's immigrants are from other African countries in the SADC region, and 24% are from Zimbabwe. Immigration has contributed to the country being a multifaceted and diverse society. The schooling environment has adjusted and has become multicultural (Perumal, 2016). Mashau (2012) argues that considering South Africa is a heterogeneous country, people are more likely to experience culture shock since exposure to diverse cultures may create a certain discomfort. This is also exacerbated by the history of interracial (and interethnic) violence and distrust experienced by many during apartheid. The increase in migrants has often caused anti-migrant sentiments, which have often led to xenophobic attacks and outbreaks. According to Gordon (2015), the outbreak of xenophobic attacks in May 2008 resulted in 62 people violently killed, 670 wounded, and about 150,000 migrants displaced.

The study investigated the role of Multicultural Education (ME) in teaching peaceful diversity in schools. The post-apartheid reforms aim to create inclusive education, but challenges persist, including inadequate infrastructure and violence. Post-apartheid, the influx of immigrants has created a new form of diversity, necessitating an innovative approach to understanding the heterogeneous nature of the country. Schools promote multiculturalism and competency by including ME in the curriculum, improving learning outcomes, and mirroring the country's diversity. However, funding constraints, overcrowding, and negative school cultures hinder the implementation of these recommendations. The study used the Integrative Theory of Peace (ITP) to explore the role of ME in schools as a peace strategy, focusing on peace's psychological, social, political, ethical, and spiritual aspects. It also examined the use of Education for Peace (EFP) to foster trust and promote inclusivity. Socialization and lack of cultural competency in South African communities may contribute to experiences of violence for migrant children or any child that might be different from the cultural norm. Therefore, the study aimed to explore the use of ME to foster a worldview among diverse cultural groups and this was done through the following objectives:

    I. To explore the nature and extent of the overall role of ME in schools.
    II. To investigate what people, think about other cultures and the concept of the worldview of different cultures.
    III. To form an action research team to suggest what needs to be included in ME and develop a sample lesson.
    IV. To test and evaluate the outcomes of the initiated intervention strategy.

2. Literature review
2.1. Public education in South Africa: realities and politics

Soudien (2019) highlights the racial divisions and privileges in South African society, which are addressed through the South African Schools Act 1996. This act aimed to unite previously separated and racialized education systems. However, Soudien (2010) identifies South Africa as an apartheid state with rigid policies that institutionalized racism. Though the national school curriculum in South Africa acknowledged the heritage value of indigenous knowledge, historically colonial Africa has consisted of Western knowledge that was grounded exclusively in western worldviews which still have a lingering impact in current societies and school curriculum as a whole. (Lefora *et al.* 2024). (Bakali 2019) and Patel 2018) once reported that Black learners were suspended for their hair, and Muslims faced Islamophobia. Scholars like Manik and Ramrathan (2021) and Matebese (2021) highlight the challenges in the education system, including racism and cultural competency issues, which have led to political parties like the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) protesting at a Cape Town school in (November 2020). Further, Lefora *et al.* (2024) discusses the importance and the value of integrating indigenous knowledge to inform a multicultural contextual curriculum in the Life Science. Scholars like Merier and Hartel (2009) highlight the failures of the education system and policies for diversity and ME, highlighting socially constructed stereotypes and the need for recognition of different identities for diversity and cultural competency.

2.2. Issues of race and social exclusion

Race and social exclusion in South Africa are deeply ingrained in society and the educational environment. These issues have been influenced by past racial political systems, which often marginalized certain groups (Badat and Draft, 2014). According to Moyo (2019), many multicultural schools face challenges that relate to race, class and immigration and these cultural differences affect the relations and levels of interaction and inclusion in some instances. Education policymakers and researchers currently debate the inclusion and exclusion of learners and race narratives. Studies have explored the experiences of migrant children in South African schools, revealing that they face marginalization due to their skin color and their countries of origin (Makoelle, 2014). The DBE regulations systematically exclude Zimbabwean children and other foreign learners, citing anti-migrant sentiments within South African communities (Crush and Tawodzera, 2014). Makoelle (2014) describes the plight of Black learners in previously advantaged white schools who face exclusion, particularly in academic subjects, indicating a struggle toward positive race relations.

Post-1994, the concept of the "rainbow nation" was defined, expecting South Africa to lean towards social inclusion and non-discrimination (Soudien and Sayed, 2004). However, school policies aimed at social inclusion and equal access to education seem far-fetched from practices that address the realities of teachers and learners at school. Racial segregation infiltrates schooling systems, and it is essential to consider that education is the foundation of good citizenship (Malherbe, 2004).

2.3. Culture and diversity

Culture is a way of life that includes essential knowledge, skills, and values, expressed through language, and transmitted to the young for cultural continuity and survival (Thaman, 2013). Education mirrors the social fabric; a classroom is where learners learn and express their culture around their peers (Chung, 2018). Former all-White schools have been instrumental in the undoing of apartheid's segregation, but they still function as largely mono-cultural (Alexander, 2011). However, Moyo (2019) argues that being aware of cultural diversity that exists in the school will help in the designing and implementing culturally competent approach for students. Teachers of language and culture must deal with different disciplines to meet the interdependence between language and culture. Gutman *et al.* (2023) discusses that teacher diversity allows for inclusion and articulation of different life-words and perspectives which in the end benefits teachers, learners and parents and the more learners are able to engage and learn from those different to themselves the greater and deeper their preparation for engaging and managing differences. Culture is not limited to the communities that learners or teachers hail from; it is transmitted through the education syllabus (Ngidi, 2018). This challenges former all-White schools, as learners are forced to give up their own culture to fit in. However, developing and teaching a comprehensive curriculum that includes the entire scope of cultural competency remains a challenge (Brottman *et al.* 2020). Goldenberg (2014) argues that both learners and teachers in the classroom may struggle with cultural competency due to a clash of cultures and stereotypes developed due to past experiences with a particular group. Schools are important sites of cross-cultural interaction, which can be pivotal to the development of strategies aimed at multicultural understanding and combating racism.

3. The development of Multicultural Education (ME) in South Africa

ME in South Africa has evolved significantly over the years, shaped by the country's history of apartheid and its transition to democracy. The primary goal of ME is to help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function within their own cultures and the global community (Forrest *et al.* 2017). To be effective, it must be aligned with promoting social justice (Lawyer 2018). Post-apartheid, South Africa faced challenges in moving to a more self-conscious standing of how we take positions within the structures and narratives of our social analyses (Soudien, 2010). The South African Constitution, adopted in 1996, recognizes the importance of multiculturalism and diversity, guaranteeing the right to education for all citizens and promoting

equal access to quality education. However, the failure of the government to drive through a practical integration and multicultural policy that would deliberately include former all-Black schools effectively left them out of a structured program for delivering change. One key initiative is the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), introduced in 2012, which aims to provide a more inclusive and diverse curriculum that reflects the country's multicultural heritage (Ngidi, 2018). The primary goal of ME is the development of autonomous students who maintain a commitment to racial equality with skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values required to live in a democracy (Soudien, 1994). Another critical aspect of ME in South Africa is the promotion of Indigenous languages. The national government, through the South African Constitution, recognizes the importance of preserving and promoting indigenous languages, and efforts have been made to incorporate these languages into the education system and explicitly express that everyone has a right to use the language and to participate in the cultural practices of their choice (RSA, 1996a). The success of ME in practice will depend on teachers' understanding and commitment. Teacher training programs have been developed to equip educators with the skills and knowledge needed to create inclusive learning environments (Carrington *et al*. 1986). Additionally, South Africa has seen the rise of initiatives promoting intercultural dialogue and exchange between different communities. ME in South Africa has evolved, but it still faces challenges in promoting social justice and addressing historical injustices. Former all-Black schools in South Africa have not fully implemented multilingual education despite efforts to promote inclusivity and tolerance. Challenges include resource constraints, lack of trained teachers, and ongoing teacher training. Despite these obstacles, ME represents a significant step towards a more equitable society, promoting social cohesion, national unity, and individual empowerment through education.

4. Theoretical framework

The paper is underpinned by two theories, i.e., ITP and EFP. The ITP conceptualizes peace education by emphasizing cultural diversity, human rights, and social justice. ITP posits that peace is a psychological, social, political, ethical, and spiritual state that is deeply embedded in human cognitions and psychosocial development. EFP is a holistic school program that aims to create a non-violent and peaceful environment that meets human needs emotionally, socially, and intellectually (Danesh, 2011). It emphasizes the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for building and sustaining peaceful relationships in society. The EFP's link with the International Theory of Peace (ITP) is formed by four basic conditions: a culture of peace, a unity-based worldview, a culture of healing, and a peace-based curriculum for all education activities (Danesh, 2011). The EFP focuses on sustaining peace from the human development and life continuum, which comprises intellect, emotions, socialization, moral compass, and spirituality. It aims to create unique school communities characterized by a culture of peace, a culture of healing, and a culture of excellence. A school environment with a culture of peace should be characterized by mutual trust, unity in diversity, the practice of human rights and democracy, and the ability to maintain a peaceful environment through the prevention of violence and peaceful conflict resolution (Korze, 2019).

5. Methodology

This study was conducted in Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal, using a qualitative approach and two data collection tools, i.e., interviews and focus groups. The school is situated Mariannhill, which is a formerly Colored dominated township and Itshelimnyama, a predominantly Black township. It is situated about 5.7 kilometers from the Pinetown central business district, a buzzing metropolitan area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. As a result, the population around Pinetown or the school is a representation of the larger South African context with the presence of diverse population. The overall aim of the research was to explore the use of mindfulness in peace education in schools to promote peaceful societies and acceptance of diversity. Then, an effective intervention strategy was designed by developing a lesson plan that encourages transformation and positive change. The study targeted 40 participants; however, due to certain limitations, the final sample

consisted of 20 participants, i.e., 15 for interviews and five for a focus group. It should be noted that included in the 20 participants; five were non-South Africans but Africans who are working in the same school demographic details are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants as per their positions

Category/ Role in School	Interview	Focus Group
Principal	1	0
Deputy Principal	1	0
HOD Humanities	2	0
HOD Science and Technology	2	0
LO Educators	3	3
General Educators	5	1
Student Teacher	1	1

Table 2. training outline for the development of ME intervention

Day	Content	Outcomes, discussed in Chapter 4
Day One	**Introduction of ME Concept** Understanding the concept of ME. Recognizing the importance of diversity in the classroom. Tracing the evolution of ME. Learning from past successes and challenges. Developing Cultural Competence. Strategies for building cultural awareness. Building Positive Relationships.	The participants share their own experience and understanding of ME and learn from the knowledge shared by everyone. Together form an understanding and meaning of diversity. Explored the evolution of ME and took a lesson from it. Self-Reflection and Awareness. Assessing personal biases and beliefs. Fostering empathy and understanding. Suggested ways in which ME can be incorporated into the curriculum. Communicating effectively with students and parents.
Day Two	**Creating an Inclusive Classroom Environment** Explore Inclusive Teaching Practices Adapting curriculum to reflect diverse perspectives. Incorporating multicultural literature and resources. **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy- Differentiated Instruction** Adapting teaching methods to diverse learning styles. Addressing language and cultural barriers. Building Positive Relationships. Communicating effectively with students and parents. Creating a welcoming and inclusive classroom community. **Integrating Multicultural Content Curriculum Integration** Embedding diverse perspectives into lesson plans. Incorporating multicultural themes across subjects.	Creating a welcoming and inclusive classroom community. Embedding diverse perspectives into lesson plans. Incorporating multicultural themes across subjects. Personal story sharing of multicultural experience and how individuals are influenced by their experience. A team of 3 Educators worked with the Facilitator in developing a lesson plan on ME The lesson plan was evaluated and adopted by the group. Commitment to the implementation of the teaching of ME.
Day Three	Action Planning and Implementation. Developing a Lesson Plan on ME.	A Sample lesson on ME that the LO Educators would implement going forward. (See Appendix O)

Following the initial data collection, the next phase was to form an action research team to develop a lesson plan on ME for school educators. The research team was made up of all the 20 educators who participated during the data collection phase. They attended three-day training sessions aimed to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment. The training sessions focused on identifying individual perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards ME, as well as their knowledge

of worldview. The training provided a critical overview of ME and empowered participants to introduce ME into the school curriculum. The participants committed to implementing the lesson plan and advocating for ME, aiming for a respectful and peaceful school environment. The lesson plan was developed based on the training outline, and ME was successfully implemented. Underneath is the content for the three-day program.

6. Data analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is done simultaneously with data collection as that makes research flexible (Creswell 2014). Thematic content analysis was applied as a method of analyzing qualitative data. According to Nowell *et al.* (2017), thematic content analysis is a method that is used in qualitative research across the range of epistemologies and research questions for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within the data collected. Themes were selected according to their frequency in the responses of the participants. Topics that came up more frequently were analyzed and placed into broad groups or themes.

The data collected was coded and categorized into themes. The presentation of the findings included quotations and descriptive informative summaries of those participating in interviews, focus group and general observations.

7. Findings and discussion

The results were categorized into three broad themes: the value of ME in schools, ME as a concern, and the development and promotion of ME.

Table 3. Themes and sub-themes of the study as analyzed and identified

Main Themes	Corresponding Sub-themes
Theme One: The Value of ME in Schools (Focus Group, Interviews & Observation)	Cultural Competence and Career Advantage Social and Emotional Development Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Global Citizenship and Preparedness Cultural Enrichment Improved Academic Outcomes
Theme Two: ME as a subject of concern (Interviews & Observation)	Improper Implementation Poor Institutional Support Impact on Students Need for Policies and Impacts on School Curriculum
Theme Three: Developing and Promoting ME Interventions in Schools (Focus Groups, Interviews & Observation)	Curriculum Enhancement Creating Opportunities to Celebrate Culture Promoting Inclusive Teaching Strategies Teacher Development and Diversity Other Methods of Implementing and Promoting ME in Schools

7.1. Theme one: the value of Multicultural Education (ME) in schools

The participants in the study expressed a strong cheerful outlook towards the incorporation of multicultural teaching practices (ME) into the school curriculum. They viewed it as a vital step towards creating a more inclusive and diverse learning environment, promoting tolerance and empathy among students. They also saw the value and long-term benefits of incorporating ME into the curriculum. These sentiments were echoed by the other educators in their respective interviews. Their responses were primarily positive, as observed by participant Anonymous D.

> "I am excited about the prospect of introducing multicultural teaching practices at our school. It is a vital step towards creating a more inclusive and diverse learning

environment. I believe it will help students better understand and appreciate different cultures, which is crucial in today's globalized world." (Anonymous D, Interview)

These sentiments were echoed by the other educators in their respective interviews:

"I fully support the idea of incorporating multicultural teaching practices into our curriculum. It not only enriches the educational experience for students but also promotes tolerance and empathy. I am ready to contribute my expertise and resources to make this a reality." (Anonymous C, Interview)

The National Association for Multicultural Education emphasizes that implementing multicultural teaching practices creates a more inclusive learning environment, helping students acknowledge and respect their unique backgrounds (Nieto, 2017). ME fosters tolerance and reduces prejudice by encouraging students to understand and appreciate diverse cultures (Sleeter and Carmona, 2017). This positively impacts student attitudes toward diversity, leading to increased tolerance and reduced prejudices. In most traditional African cultures, boys are taught at a young age that they are to act strong, not cry, carry a stick to retaliate with fight in case of a challenge, consequently this teaching the above suggestions indicate that teaching multiculturalism at a in school can have the similar value in grounding the young people into peaceful ways of dealing with challenges and focus on peaceful strategies of co-existing. The contribution by the participants suggests that the exposure of students to multicultural settings and education will help foster empath, tolerance and an appreciation of diverse worldview and ultimately contribute to a more harmonious and interconnected society. ME has been associated with improved academic performance. Banks and Banks, (2019) notes that integrating diverse perspectives and experiences into the curriculum can make the learning experience more engaging and relevant to students, leading to better academic outcomes. The study identified several sub-themes that highlighted the benefits of having ME, contributing to the fulfillment of objective one, which is to explore the nature and extent of the overall role of ME in schools.

7.2. Theme two: Multicultural Education (ME) as a subject of concern

Despite the value of multicultural education in schools, some participants express skepticism about its implementation. They worry about the efficacy, resource allocation, challenges, identity politics, lack of standardization, and cultural relativism associated with ME. To effectively implement ME, proper preparation and planning are essential. Investing in resources, providing teacher training, and carefully planning integration are crucial. Balancing the curriculum and avoiding unintentional side-lining of any group is essential. One of the concerns which was faced by those who sort to develop a culturally inclusive curriculum and opening a space for previously marginalized indigenous knowledge in various aspects of education including science was that there has been no documented body of colonial curriculum. (Lefora, *et al.* 2024). Concurrently, (Parkhouse, *et al.* 2019) also emphasized the importance of future researchers to find the balance between providing knowledge about student's cultures and guarding against promoting stereotypes or broad generalization. It is crucial to consider these concerns and drawbacks to create an inclusive environment. The identified sub-themes of ME are discussed in detail, supported by quotes from the participants. Anonymous B (interview), voices their concerns about the preparation and planning need to implement such a measure effectively.

"Multicultural teaching practices are essential, but we should also consider logistics. We will need to invest in appropriate resources, provide teacher training, and plan the integration carefully. We can successfully implement these practices and enhance our students' education with proper preparation."

The participant goes on to explain:

> "While I see the value in multicultural teaching practices, I am concerned about potential challenges. We need to ensure that the curriculum remains balanced and that we are intentionally sidelining any group. Planning thoughtfully and addressing these concerns is essential to avoid unintended consequences."

Multicultural education (ME) aims to celebrate diversity but faces concerns that overemphasis on cultural differences may lead to unintended consequences, such as fostering division. The promotion of cultural relativism in ME can be problematic, as it may inadvertently suggest that all cultural practices and beliefs are equally valid, potentially undermining critical thinking and evaluation of cultural norms (Johnson, 2019). Inadequate or inconsistent implementation of ME practices can lead to resistance from traditional or conservative educational systems, educators, administrators, or parents who are hesitant to embrace change. These challenges may be further exacerbated by systems that offer limited resources toward ME, such as insufficient teacher training, outdated or inadequate teaching materials, or a lack of support for culturally diverse extracurricular activities. Concerns also revolve around the potential lack of adequate preparation and training for teachers to effectively implement multicultural teaching practices, potentially leading to misinterpretations or misapplications. Overemphasis on multiculturalism in schools can lead to identity politics, where students identify more strongly with their cultural or ethnic group than with their national identity.

There is a need for more robust policy support to ensure consistent implementation and long-term sustainability. There is currently no standardized template for ME, which results in a lack of a consistent framework and difficulties in assessing its impact. Educators expressed concerns about the potentiality of ME distracting from the already overcrowded CAPS curriculum in South Africa, and whether it would detract from the teaching time of other essential subjects. However, the value and benefits of teaching multicultural education remain important. Despite these concerns, teachers in the study were open to the idea of incorporating ME into the school curriculum and at their school. They believe that with commitment, adaptability, and the support of the school community, they can overcome hurdles and provide a richer educational experience for students.

7.3. Theme three: developing and promoting Multicultural Education (ME) interventions in schools

The focus groups were conducted from educators to gather views on their role as promoters of Multilingual Education (ME) and diversity in schools. The aim was to develop an action research team to suggest the inclusion of ME in the curriculum and its value in teaching and maintaining peace in schools and society. The participants provided creative ideas for implementing ME in the school curriculum and promoting diversity. One effective way to promote diversity is by enhancing the national curriculum by incorporating a diverse range of authors, historical figures, and perspectives. Teachers also suggested promoting cultural awareness programs, cultural awareness campaigns, and mentorship programs to make people aware of different cultures and nationalities. Multilingual environments, celebrating cultural awareness months, and introducing student clubs and organizations focused on diversity were also encouraged.

Anonymous B (focus group), *"We should try to infuse it into our school curriculum.":* The teachers also suggested additional programs:

> *"*We can promote events and campaigns that make people aware of the different cultures and nationalities represented." Anonymous H (focus group), "other programs suggestions included: cultural awareness programs that include events, speakers, and workshops that highlight different cultures and traditions: and mentorship programs matching students with mentors from diverse backgrounds that can offer guidance and support, fostering a sense of belonging."

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"We can promote events and campaigns that make people aware of the different cultures and nationalities represented" Anonymous H (focus group). Other program suggestions included: cultural awareness programs that include events, speakers, and workshops that highlight different cultures and traditions; and mentorship programs matching students with mentors from diverse backgrounds that can offer guidance and support, fostering a sense of belonging*."*

8. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the use of Multicultural Education (ME) in schools to foster a worldview among diverse cultural groups. Four objectives were set: exploring the role of ME in schools, investigating people's worldviews and the concept of diverse cultures, creating an action research team to suggest interventions, and testing and evaluating the outcomes of the initiated intervention strategy. A qualitative research methodology was used with the school representing South African society and the diversity of the immigrant population. The study found that South Africans are aware of demographic changes and a desire to embrace other cultures but have not fully embraced them, leading to xenophobic attacks and racial discrimination. An extensive literature review was conducted to explore methods used in teaching and implementing ME in schools, highlighting the historical background of changes in South Africa's multiculturalism and the development of multicultural education. The Integrative Theory of Peace was presented as a theoretical framework underpinning ME, which is evolving through implementation efforts. The study also investigates the worldview of diverse cultures and the concept of multiculturalism (ME) in schools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school educators to understand their views on ME and its potential to influence inclusivity and appreciation of diversity. The responses were grouped into three themes: 1) how ME can create a more inclusive learning environment, 2) how ME can influence an increased global worldview of diversity, and 3) the challenges of implementing ME in schools. However, the implementation of ME requires careful planning to ensure that the curriculum remains balanced and does not sideline other groups, especially minority groups and cultures. This involves developing strategies, using appropriate materials, and formulating instructional methods that effectively integrate diverse cultural content into the curriculum. To avoid sidelining minority groups and cultures in ME, it is essential to avoid side-lining, which promotes inclusivity, empathy, understanding, and cultural competence. This approach contributes to a more harmonious and interconnected world, but it also presents challenges. The Focus Group of Educators developed a Lesson Plan for teaching Multilingualism (ME) in schools. The team focused on curriculum enhancement, cultural awareness programs, mentorship programs, student clubs, anti-bullying policies, inclusive teaching strategies, multilingualism, peer mentoring, and teacher diversity. The team tested and evaluated the outcomes of the intervention strategy, incorporating the lesson during the school's Language Arts (LO) period to ensure valuable contributions from learners.

The study used a qualitative action research approach to achieve its objectives, involving training, data collection, and developing a sample lesson (Richie *et al.* 1997). Participants were drawn from the school context, allowing them to share their experiences and contribute to the research. The Integrative Theory of Peace and Education for Peace framework was used to integrate education and practical aspects of research. The lesson plan was not evaluated in the classroom, but it served as a starting point for creating a peaceful society through multicultural education. The study recommends three approvals for improving inclusive and equitable learning environments in schools. Firstly, the Department of Education (DBE) should cultivate cultural competence by providing professional development and training to educators. Secondly, schools should foster a culture of parent and community involvement, involving local organizations and promoting authentic cultural perspectives. Lastly, creating safe spaces for marginalized students is crucial. The study on ME in schools showed positive responses, but limited target population involvement. Future studies should involve all stakeholders, students, and DBEs for long-term curriculum decisions.

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