Fostering Culturally Responsive Schools: Student Identity Development in Cross-Cultural Classrooms

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Abstract

This research incorporates various projects to address issues of diversity in a rural Korean community with bicultural children. The interdisciplinary activities in the projects seek to help students better understand their interracial peers, accept diversity, and not engage in bullying and teasing behaviors. In addition, the social psychology projects attempt to help students develop a more open mind about each other's cultures. It also discusses how educators may be able to develop a more comprehensive and holistic curriculum on the topic of cross-cultural education.

Introduction

Today's society is a globalized society. For one's work, study, and many other reasons, people are emigrating from and immigrating to different countries around the world. As a result, people of diverse backgrounds find themselves living together, which brings about various consequences. We see stories in the news everyday about migrants being deported back to where they came from, about people still struggling with how to live together. It is in this larger context that my research takes place. In a South Korean community, which in spite of South Korea's reputation as a mostly mono-cultural society, there exist differences in family backgrounds, which result in teasing, alienation and other more serious discrimination. It is this reality that we seek to address in the school, using the arts.

When multicultural issues are brought to the forefront, the importance of multicultural and cross-cultural education is made more salient. In this case diversity has begun to significantly affect South Korean society. In the words of Frideres and Kim (2010), "the rapid influx of migrant workers and bride migrants is fundamentally reshaping the demography of the country" (p. 679). Because South Korea is "a country that has long cherished its ethnic homogeneity [for 5,000 years] ethnic diversity may pose a serious social problem" (p. 679). In South Korea, only approximately 2% of the population is foreign-born, which may suggest that the country is not very diverse (Ministry of Justice, 2013). Currently, there is little policy in place to address these issues. According to Olneck (2011), "official multicultural policy is limited in its reach to those who are designated as 'multicultural families,' that is families in which one spouse is South Korean and the other an immigrant, usually the wife, and their offspring" (p. 675). This illustrates a growing need for social, political, economic, cultural, and educational perspectives to address the issue of diversity and multiculturalism in South Korea.

To fulfill this growing need, a variety of educational approaches are needed. In this paper, I consider one particular approach that involves creating artworks. This aims to enhance students' understanding of cultures and people by developing an appreciation for artistic expressions (Song, 2009). As students make their own artworks, they are able to create their own meaning and explore their own perceptions of various cultures. This allows students to develop an appreciation for multicultural approaches (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; Chalmers, 1996, 2002; Kuster, 2006; McFee & Degge, 1977; Nieto, 1999).

This paper focuses on the educational perspective in thinking about ethnic diversity in South Korea. In particular, it describes a study that was conducted with students from the fourth through sixth grade at a small public school located in a rural part of South Korea. I discuss how these students developed a better understanding of their differences, and began to accept the idea of inclusive citizenship through the process of creating various art activities together.

By sharing the experiences from this activity, I seek to help teachers develop a pedagogical idea and a better sense of how to apply cross-cultural education methods in elementary school settings in South Korea.

Research Significance and Question

Multicultural education puts an emphasis within the classroom setting on discussing differences and contrasts (Alanay & Aydin, 2016). Aydin (2013) argues that with multicultural education, we could elicit changes in the roles of students in educational contexts. Banks (1995), elaborates on those transformations, noting that one of the goals of multicultural education is "to help all students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate, and communicate with peoples from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good" (p. xi). This is a timely perspective given the rapid increase in the number of bicultural children belonging to intercultural families where one parent comes from a different country living in South Korea. In particular, bicultural children are occasionally the targets of bullying at school, largely due to the ethnic homogeneity of the Korean population (Kang, 2010).

Educators who are faced with these kinds of social and educational phenomena ask the following: How can teachers educate students to live in and be able to succeed within a multicultural society? As in the U.S., there is a heavy focus on standardized testing in Korea. Johnson (2002) suggests this question "takes us beyond the current debate about education reform that regards standardized testing as the singular solution to our present educational dilemma and reveals the complexity of the issues facing education in the 21st century" (p. 18). Whether in a city or in a rural area, students in a diverse and multicultural society must understand that they live in the intersection of their own culture and the cultures of others (Bailey & Desai, 2005). This brings up the importance of addressing intersectionality, that is about helping people acknowledge differences with a community, and make a decision to live and work with it.

According to John Dewey (1934) and Maxine Greene (1991), art is not something that can be separated from human experience and culture. Instead, it is something that reflects the dynamic life experiences of humans who exist among complex and incomprehensible circumstances. In this context, the arts play a critical and crucial role in helping humans develop a deeper understanding of our existence within society. Accordingly, activities in this study used a variety of art forms as the tools for addressing the following research questions. First, what kinds of activities may help students better understand cross-cultural concepts, and how might these activities help them develop a better understanding of each other's cultures? How does this affect their idea of inclusive citizenship? Second, how might teachers promote

bicultural students' interest in their mothers' countries and build a sense of pride for having a dual heritage and culture? Third, how might teachers develop a curriculum with a comprehensive approach for cross-cultural education?

Literature Review

I have found that the well-established literature from the US on multiculturalism to be helpful in understanding the emerging diversity issues challenging Korean classrooms today. Multicultural education allows for students to experience equal opportunities and possibilities by removing the challenges and inequalities experiences due to cultural differences (Alanay & Aydin, 2016). Multicultural education encourages "our need to prepare students for their responsibilities in an interdependent world. It recognizes the role schools can play in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society. It values cultural differences and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. It challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice" (National Association of Multicultural Education, 2017).

Multicultural education often involves surfacing current conditions and then seeking to offer new possibilities for dealing with differences. Understanding the climate of a school is perhaps a first step. "School climate consists of the related factors of attitude, feeling, and behavior of individuals within the school system" (Hernandez & Seem, 2004, p. 256). In terms of students' attitudes, this may include the extent to which they feel safe, whether they feel the environment is supportive, and whether they feel comfortable within the environment (Edwards, Mumford, & Serra-Roldan, 2007). These various factors must be unearthed and acknowledged, with the understanding that any school environment will reflect both positive and negative feelings in students' attitudes and perceptions toward their school. This process must also include teachers' belief systems, which is reflected by and reflects their teaching approaches (Handal & Herrington, 2003). What both students and teachers believe and practice must be included in initial explorations within the school. It is thought that starting from a less effective approach and gradually moving up to a more effective one is the best way of addressing such issues (Chanda, 1992). In order for educators to develop these kinds of integrated curricula, they must first understand the complexity of the concept of cross-cultural education, for which they must first define "culture" specifically.

Culture is understood in a variety of ways by scholars, anthropologists, and others. It is a complex term that encompasses beliefs, ideas, and actions, which in turn influence the way people think, act, and designate value and meaning for things in the world (Adejumo, 2002; Di Falco & Bulte, 2011; Eaton, 1991; Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, & Cooper, 2009; Mogues & Carter, 2005; Nieto, 1999; Saravia-Shore & Arvizu, 1992). According to Goodenough (1986),

some anthropologists have defined the term to embody the common perceptions, beliefs, evaluations, and behaviors among a group of people. John H. Bodley (1994) offers two definitions of culture: a historical one that emphasizes social heritage and tradition, and a symbolic one that "arbitrarily assign[s] meanings that are shared by a society" (p. 5). Others emphasize the way culture may sociologically provide structure, norms, and cues: "Culture provides beliefs, values, and the patterns that give meaning and structure to life. It enables individuals within the multiple social groups of which they are part to function effectively in their social and cultural environments, which are constantly changing" (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001, p. 6).

Each of these different definitions encompasses certain elements of culture, yet individuals typically find ways to define culture for themselves. This makes it sometimes difficult for individuals—and in particular for students—to explain and differentiate their own cultures to others. Moreover, living in more than one cultural context may be challenging, as it asks one to embrace a pluralistic persona, for which one must juggle ideas and perspectives. In a world increasingly shrunk by social media, a global economy, and intense numbers of immigrants moving across the globe, it becomes imperative for students to be exposed to varieties of cultures, arts, experiences, habits, and beliefs. If there's any hope of living together on this little blue marble, we must all broaden our ideas and experiences of socio-cultural spaces so we can thrive in many different settings. The idea of a cultural identity is indeed complex, and working with students with such identities can be dynamic and demanding (Di Falco & Bulte, 2011; Eaton, 1991; Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, & Cooper, 2009; Mogues & Carter, 2005; Nieto, 1999; Saravia-Shore & Arvizu, 1992).

It is particularly important and challenging for teachers to determine how to best manage these dynamics when they have students with bicultural backgrounds. Teachers, just like any other individual, are influenced by social and cultural contexts, and these are bound to shape their perspectives and pedagogy for teaching in multicultural classrooms (Lightfoot, 1998). For most students, the school setting presents the first opportunity to think about issues around the color of their skin in a broader and deeper way (Schofield, 1995). As Schofield points out, this highlights the importance of the teachers' open-mindedness and knowledge about cross-cultural education. This is because teachers often determine the culture of the classroom, in a way that they could either foster acceptance and understanding or promote hostility and stereotyping. In other words, teachers have an important role in setting the tone of the classroom by modeling and encouraging certain desirable behaviors while discouraging and sanctioning other undesirable behaviors (Schofield, 1995).

One way to describe the importance of culture to students is through the arts. Johnson (2002) emphasizes "Art is culture, and through art, culture expresses itself in complex or elliptical

ways, revealing a great deal about a culture's perceptual and conceptual world" (p. 20). Similarly, Kuster (2006) explains that arts are created within a cultural environment, such that "cultural influences guide expression in art, and art records and influences culture" (p.33). Therefore, providing students the opportunity to learn about others' cultures and further their cultural perspectives is giving them a chance to grow as human beings. With a pedagogical approach that teaches about diversity through a focus on art, students will be able to obtain essential knowledge and learn how to communicate with other cultures (Johnson, 2002). Furthermore, Johnson (2002) recommends that educators facilitate intercultural competence among students by exposing them to the "voices, images, feelings, ideas, and experiences of diverse cultures" (p.18). This provides them with an opportunity to "broaden and enrich [their] cultural knowledge of diverse peoples" (p.18). Through this, they can also obtain more information and knowledge about various cultures. They can also explore the cultural, historical, political, and psychological roots of their own identities.

Such an exploration has many possible outcomes for students. Students can better understand diversity, learn about the arts in various cultures, and realize that people from various cultures can and will change their habits of mind and broaden their understanding. This kind of educational approach should also help students understand that there are people in this world with different experiences than their own, who express these experiences differently as well. They should also be able to understand that cultures are created by people, with their own roles and contributions. Hopefully they should be invited to wonder about how people of other cultures may view their own cultures (Banks, 1995; Cahan & Kocur, 1996; Cross, 2001; Radnor, 2001; Saravia-Shore & Arvizu, 1992). Through an art-centered approach in teaching and learning about diversity, this can help create a learning environment that "facilitates intercultural knowledge and dialogue" in addition to "support[ing] intercultural sensitivity, awareness, and understanding" (Johnson, 2002, p. 20). This can ultimately help students understand culture as a "complex web of significance" (Johnson, 2002, p. 20). Many of these outcomes represent the goals of this activity.

Methodology

This research draws upon a variety of data collected primarily through qualitative research methods. In addition, it also draws on quantitative research methods using surveys. To examine how multicultural education can be delivered through the arts, I conducted a series of case studies. I used this series of case studies to gain a deeper understanding of the issues that relate to my research topic. This methodology also allowed me to effectively investigate and explain the connections between the societal phenomena and multicultural issues in schools in Korea.

Participants

In the southern district of South Korea, there is a town called Gangjin, which is home to approximately 40,000 people (Honam Regional Statistics Office, 2013). In Gangjin, there are 225 foreign-born females who have married Korean men, and there are 347 bicultural children who were born to foreign-born females and Korean men (Gangjin Gunchung, 2013). Of the 46 students in grades 1 through 6 at Jakchoen Elementary School in Gangjin, there are 26 bicultural students. This is a stark contrast to schools in the urban areas, which illustrates that bicultural children are typically present in rural areas. For example, at the Gwangju Songwon Elementary School a mere 1.5 hours away from Gangjin, there is not a single bicultural student among its student body of 576 children.

According to Principal Park JungSoo of Jakchoen Elementary School, "Most foreign-born wives are Southeast Asian. Because of their busy lives as farmers, most parents of these students are not able to spend much time with their children, and we are trying to develop many after-school programs in order to help these students", Lim JongMan, the teacher responsible for multicultural education at the school, says, "Many of these students are subject to bullying by the Korean students and exhibit low self-esteem, and I think it is because of a lack of understanding about other cultures. We have to create relevant lesson plans." In this context, I sought to conduct five cross-cultural activities. These activities were carried out in 2012. For this activity, all students from grades 4 to 6 participated, which comprised a total of 26 students. Of these students, 15 were Korean and 11 were half-Korean, whose mothers came from the Philippines, Cambodia, Japan, China, or Vietnam. This activity also involved the participation of multicultural education teacher Lim JongMan and Principal Park JungSoo, in addition to several teachers and staff members. I served the role of leading the activity as the workshop leader and researcher.

Data Collection & Analysis

Data were collected continuously while students participated in a series of five different types of activities. I incorporated data on the student discussions, essay writing, and their processes of creating the activities from the teachers' observations and the research assistants' field notes. I also gathered data from asking individual students a variety of structured and unstructured questions, to which they were free to respond in an open-ended way. The students' works and the documentation of their experiences vis-à-vis the integrated curriculum, the aesthetics of the activities, and their reactions to social issues became rich data sources for this research. Teachers' feedback on the students' activities and participation were also valuable sources of data.

In addition, data were collected from in-depth interviews with mothers of bicultural students, fathers of Korean descent who were married to non-Korean women, parents-in-law with a foreign daughter-in-law, and elders with bicultural families as neighbors. Interviews were also conducted with residents and government officials of the area around the school. The student survey was administered at six points over the course of the activity: before any of the activities began and at the end of each activity. The survey comprised of 20 questions across 5 categories – each with 4 questions. The questions and results from the survey are described in detail in the Findings section. A more detailed explanation on the activities can be found in the following section.

For the qualitative data analysis, I used NUD-IST (non-numerical unstructured data indexing, searching, and theorizing) software. Also, following Delament's (2002) structure, I coded and indexed the data by hand. In addition, I utilized SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) to conduct the quantitative analysis.

Project Procedures

This project sought to address what kinds of activities may help students better understand cross-cultural concepts. In addition, it sought to explore how art activities may help students better understand each other's cultures and celebrate their differences, thereby developing an idea of inclusive citizenship. To this end, several classroom activities were conducted.

These five cross-cultural activities took a constructive approach, in which the teacher pre-planned only the opening activity and designed subsequent activities based on students' interests. In other words, these were activities in which the teacher was the facilitator and the students were the leaders. This approach encouraged students to develop their own ideas and ensured that students were engaged and excited about the activities (Lovat, 2002). In particular, these activities utilized the arts, such as film, storytelling, manwha (Korean comics), and visual arts. These elements were inspired by Johnson's belief that the arts play an important role in diversity education.

Activity 1. Exploring Why People from Different Cultures Live Together

In the first activity, students were shown a slide show and short films about diversity. The film showed students scenes such as elementary school students in class from classrooms around the world. After viewing films of classrooms with students from various cultural backgrounds, such as in the United States, students were very engaged and asked several questions about why people from different cultures live together, since when, why people move to other countries, and whether they are bullied.

As previously mentioned, because South Korea has a long history of being an ethnically homogeneous nation, many students found it difficult to understand and imagine classrooms with students from many different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. In fact, they found it difficult to fully grasp the concept of diversity itself. Although Jakchoen Elementary School is considered to be one of the more diverse elementary schools in South Korea, the fact remains that students attending this school have at least a mother or a father of Korean descent. Hence, each has a connection to Korean culture, and there are no students with both non-Korean parents. To help facilitate students' understanding of diversity, students and teachers decided to use an art-making activity as a tool for better comprehension of cultural diversity.

Before beginning the art-making activity, students were shown a slide show and several contemporary artworks about diversity. Helpful resources included *Rethinking Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education, 1st edition* (Cahan and Kocur, eds., 1996) and *Rethinking Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education, 2nd edition* (Joo, Keehn II, and Ham-Roberts, eds., 2011). This was to help students understand how different social groups may come to live together, and to help them think about the issues of inequality in our society (Bailey & Desai, 2005).

Activity 2. Learning about Their Family's Cultures

At the time of this study, 57% of students at Jakchoen Elementary School had a foreign mother and all had a Korean father. Thus, this activity was an opportunity for all students to learn more about their family's cultures. All students were asked to research their family's cultures. Students were asked to share stories and information about what they know about their family's cultures. However, it became quickly apparent that most bicultural students knew very little if anything about their family's cultures. Thus, they were assigned as homework to find out more information about their family's cultures and stories about their parent's childhoods. The classroom teachers also collected additional references about these other cultures. In fact, the teacher's role is important in diverse classrooms because it is an "important challenge for teachers…to create classrooms that will provide an effective educational experience for diverse populations" (Zwirn & Graham, 2005).

As Cynthia Cohen (1999) argues, it is particularly important to develop an understanding about one's mother's culture because it provides "opportunities for children to acquire the skills and sensibilities…need[ed] for intercultural competence". Through these activities, students may "learn how to interact respectfully with others, how to learn from others, and how to listen" (p. 3). If there is enough time, it is likely to be helpful to invite parents and other adults from the surrounding neighborhoods to develop a better understanding of diversity issues more broadly. This may help foreign individuals be "embraced as qualified

members of the community with knowledge, traditions, and arts experiences to share with children, teachers, and the community at large" (Arther-Cunningham, 2007, p. 29).

The following week, the bicultural students in the class shared their stories about their family's cultures. Although some students were shy at first, they became more enthusiastic as their fellow classmates expressed interest in their stories. That said, many students did not seem to take the discussion seriously or have an appreciation for it. Several students looked disengaged, remarked that the other cultures were strange, and laughed at the foreign-sounding names of locations.

Activity 3. Conducting Research on the Historical Sites and Culture of Their Families

When we had presentations of what they found, the bicultural students showed particular interest and curiosity regarding the palaces and other historical sites of their mothers' home countries. Thus, the next activity was designed to be on this topic.

Students presented not only the background research that they had conducted on this topic, but also participated in an activity of trying to find similarities and commonalities across the different cultures. Through research and exploration, students identified a circular shape as one commonality. For example, several palaces, their decorations, roofs, gates, windows, and towers had a circular design. Fifth grader MiRae asked, "What does it mean that these faraway countries have a commonality?" As a follow-up question, sixth grader HyunJu asked, "Are you saying that these things are all equally important regardless of what country they belong to?" Each activity participant signed an informed consent form before participating. The students' names in this paper are pseudonyms.

For this activity, students explored many other things that had a circular shape. They came up with an extensive list that included the earth, the sun, the moon, human pupils, paintings on chapel ceilings, Christian halos, mandalas, crowns, rings, rice cakes, wheels, and clocks. In addition, they researched the symbolic meaning of a circle, which included inclusiveness, wholeness, cycles, and unity. During this activity, fourth grader ChulMin asked, "Why is a circle inclusive?" The students had a discussion of their thoughts on this inspiring question. This was a particularly important question to address because it allowed for an explicit discussion about identity and diversity. This discussion seemed to allow students to move past their typical viewpoints and adopt a more pluralistic perspective on diversity. In discussing circles and symbols, students were also able to reflect on the life experiences of people and their cultures that these art forms convey (Dewey, 1934).

Activity 4. Creating Manwha

For the next activity, students drew inside a circle on colored paper to depict their thoughts on the following prompt: "How to get along with friends." In describing their drawings, students explained, "I want to be a person who is full of smiles and sunshine for our classmates and foreigners" (KyungA, sixth grade); "I drew a musical note because I bring pop songs to my diverse neighbors" (SiWoo, sixth grade); "The clouds with lightning show that I am sad, and I want to be with someone else rather than alone" (GunSu, fourth grade); "I want to be a cool person like wind, and I'll push away with a gust of wind anyone who is mean to my friends" (MinHo, fifth grade). Students' comments were collected during their presentations. In addition, students included notes and descriptions about their projects, which were written alongside their artworks.

Afterwards, below the circle, students drew manwha with characters and some dialogue. Manwha/manga is a genre of visual art that is similar to a comic book or a graphic novel. The researcher chose to use art in this activity because it "provides critical connections between the context of students' lives and the content of school curricula" (Zwirn & Graham, 2005, p. 267). In particular, manwha was chosen as an artistic tool because students were familiar with this genre of art and it allowed for the incorporation of some text via the speech bubbles. The dialogue that was included in the speech bubbles included the following points in order of frequency: not bullying, not teasing, sharing one's own culture, trying to learn the other language, starting a conversation, not bad-mouthing, learning the greetings in the other language and using them, not ignoring them as being of a minority group. The visual expression seemed to help students articulate the issues around diversity. Perhaps because manwha was a familiar art form to many, students participated with much more enthusiasm in this activity than during any other week. They expressed particular interest in exploring the topic of diversity, which suggested that an art tool like manwha could be even more powerful than other forms of art that some may argue are more sophisticated and complex.

Activity 5. Creating a Circle Activity

Maxine Greene (1991) emphasizes that the arts have the power to mobilize and engage individuals' imagination in such ways as to "resist the forces that press people into passivity and bland acquiescence" (p. 2). As a way to engage the creative imagination of the students, students created a "Circle Activity" on the school field on the last day of the activity. Students began by collecting grass, pebbles, foliage, fallen flowers, and a little bit of rubbish (see Figures 1, 2, 3 & 4).

Figure 1. Student's work

Early on, students had a look of seriousness as if they had become artists who were contemplating the design of a large new activity. However, upon completion, they were back to running around the field to compare their own artworks with others' artworks, and discussing the shapes of the various activities. Each student had a chance to present his or her activity, including the process of creating it, the symbolic meaning behind the design, and thoughts while creating the activity. Students gradually demonstrated more enthusiasm in the activity, which suggested that art could be an appropriate vehicle for teaching students about diversity.

Figure 2. Student's work

In addition, at the suggestion of a few students, all participants created a collaborative Circle Activity as well. At this point, students seemed to begin to understand that there is a diverse population of people in this world, with different people expressing their experiences in

different ways and through different cultures. They seemed to have a better appreciation for other cultures, and an understanding that other cultures are just as valuable as their own. In other words, students began to acknowledge that various individuals each play an important role in creating culture (Cahan & Kocur, 1996; Di Falco & Bulte, 2011; Mogues & Carter, 2005).

Figure 3. Student's work

One teacher who participated in the activity remarked, "These activities gave both the students and the teachers an opportunity to realize that we should think more about societal issues and problems that surround us." Another teacher said, "I think there is a need for students to learn more about societal changes and cultural diversity in general, and I think the teacher has an important role and responsibility for leading this effort."

For group art-making activities, it is more important to focus on how participants are able to transform their perspectives through the artistic process, rather than simply judging the final art product.
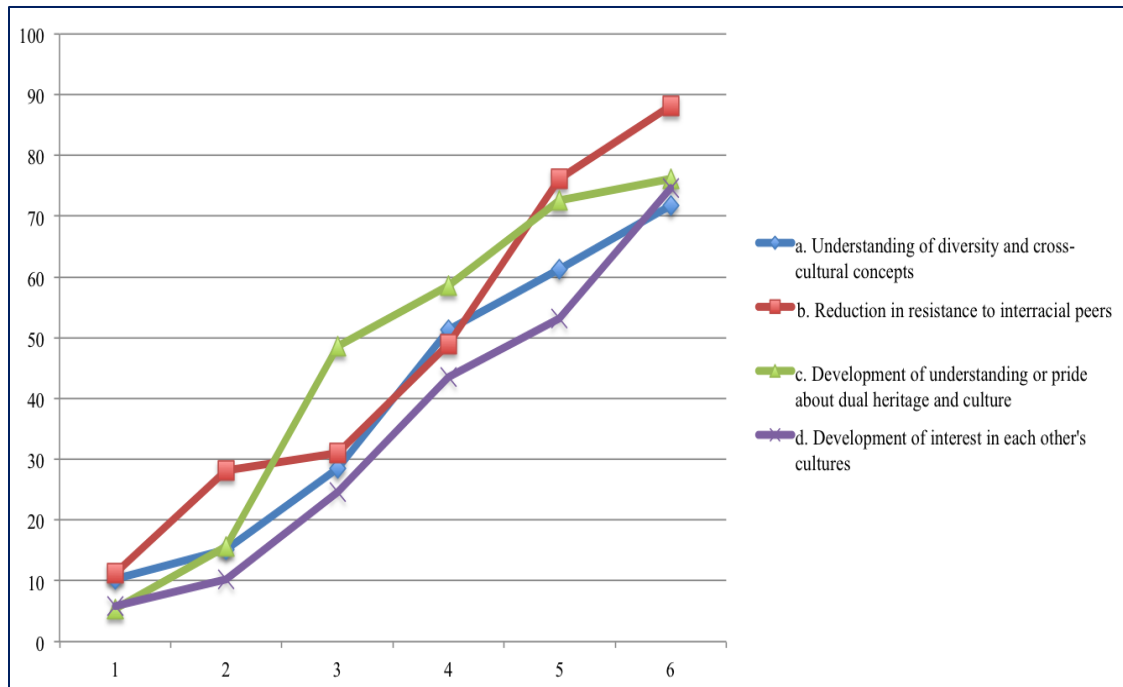
Figure 4. Student's work

Because all of the students who participated in this activity were of Asian descent, students and I decided to have an additional activity that would broaden their perspectives to other non-Asian cultures. Something to keep in mind for the next time this activity is done, is to as Desai (2005) suggested, "we need to construct 'formative narratives' (Giroux, 1992) in class by charting the global networks that connect economic, social, political processes to aesthetic production thereby opening spaces for students to examine the relationship between local and global" (p. 305). To this end, students and teachers decided to have a cross-cultural exchange activity in the future with an elementary school in the United States.

Findings and Discussion

How did the five activities over the three-month period affect students' understanding of cross-cultural concepts and inclusive citizenship? To explore this, I conducted a survey of the students. In order to assess their changes over time, the same survey was administered by the researcher to the students six times: before any of the activities began, and at the end of each activity. To reduce response bias, surveys were conducted anonymously and no identifiers were collected.

The assessment of student learning in this workshop was carried out on a continuous basis and was both formal and informal in nature. Through the survey questionnaire, the researcher was able to observe changes in students' attitudes and comfort levels with each of the activities. In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher asked students to reflect on what they had learned in the form of a short essay or interview. According to Figures 5 and 6, the responses became more positive after each activity across each of the 5 categories. Students reported having an improved understanding of diversity and having a reduced level of resistance to bicultural classmates. We examine each of the findings below.

Note 1: *N* = 26. Responses were on a scale from 0 to 100. Reported values represent means across all respondents.

Note 2: Mean responses of level of comfort during activities 1 through 6

Note 3: Time indicates 6 different survey collection points. Time 1 indicates pre-activity survey administration. Time 2 indicates survey after Activity #1. Time 6 indicates survey after final Activity #5.

Figure 5. Findings from four of five survey categories

Understanding of Diversity and Cross-cultural Concepts

The progression of students' understanding of and attitudes toward cross-cultural diversity is apparent from the survey results and the interview data (see Figure 5). Before any of the activities began, there were only 10% of students who responded that they understood the concept of ethnic diversity—that is, that their classmates can come from different cultures with different foods activities, holidays, etc. However, after all 5 activities had been completed, 73% of the students reported that they understood this concept. This seems to be the result of the fact that during the 5 activities, students asked many questions about multicultural, cross-cultural, and intercultural concepts; had indirect experiences through slide presentations and video clips; and learned about differences in multicultural circumstances in other countries like the U.S. and the biracial circumstance in Korea. Students who were used to taking ethnic homogeneity as a given realized that that is not the case throughout the world, especially in an ethnically diverse place like the U.S. Some students also spoke of learning that diversity does not only refer to race, ethnicity, the color of one's skin, and gender, but

also physical abilities and religious beliefs. This suggested that students were beginning to think of diversity quite broadly (see Figure 5).

Reduction in Resistance to Bicultural Peers:

There were 26 students in the fourth to sixth grades at this school. Despite being at a small school and knowing one another, on the first survey only 10% of students reported that their bicultural peers are just like themselves and not different or strange. Of course, this response was not only from students with two Korean parents but everyone. In addition, according to interviews, students described the mothers of their classmates as having strange accents, making different food, having different skin colors that were uncomfortable to them. Despite that initial reaction, over the course of 5 activities, their resistance began to reduce gradually, thus showing a positive pattern in Figure 5. This kind of an acceptance or understanding should be something that needs to be taught starting in elementary school. This can hopefully help reduce bullying and teasing behaviors later on as well. Students were able to develop a better understanding of and a reduction in resistance to bicultural peers through these hands-on activities. In line with Greene's idea (1995) that "we need openness and variety as well as inclusion" (p. 163) the students exhibited this type of openness in their artistic procedures (see Figure 5).

Development of Understanding/Pride about Heritage and Culture

Particularly during the second and third activities, the bicultural students showed particular interest and curiosity regarding their mother's home country. Through the storytelling activity about the foreign mothers' cultures, students began to accept and show more interest and pride in the other cultures. According to McKim and Steinbergh (2004), poetry and storytelling allow us to "weave together…feelings and environment." This activity expresses students' ability to "describe the way they see the world, rather than how others want them to see it" (p. 7-8). One student described in her interview that she had previously been embarrassed about her mother being a foreigner, but this activity helped her understand that her mother was an important person. Another student reported that he had never imagined he would be jealous of other students with a non-Korean parent (this student had two Korean parents), but this occasion led him to desire having two cultural backgrounds. Through this, it became clear how important the educator's role is in influencing young students and their perspectives. As such, it is important to make sure that biases are limited when conducting these activities.

As the activities progressed, through art activities, students also reported having a better understanding or pride about their mothers who came from other countries and their cultures. In addition, the bicultural students reported that they felt more empowered. During one of the activities, one student even declared, "Let's celebrate our differences!" Figure 5 shows this

graphically, in that the end point regarding level of pride is a significant improvement over the initial 6% (see Figure 5).
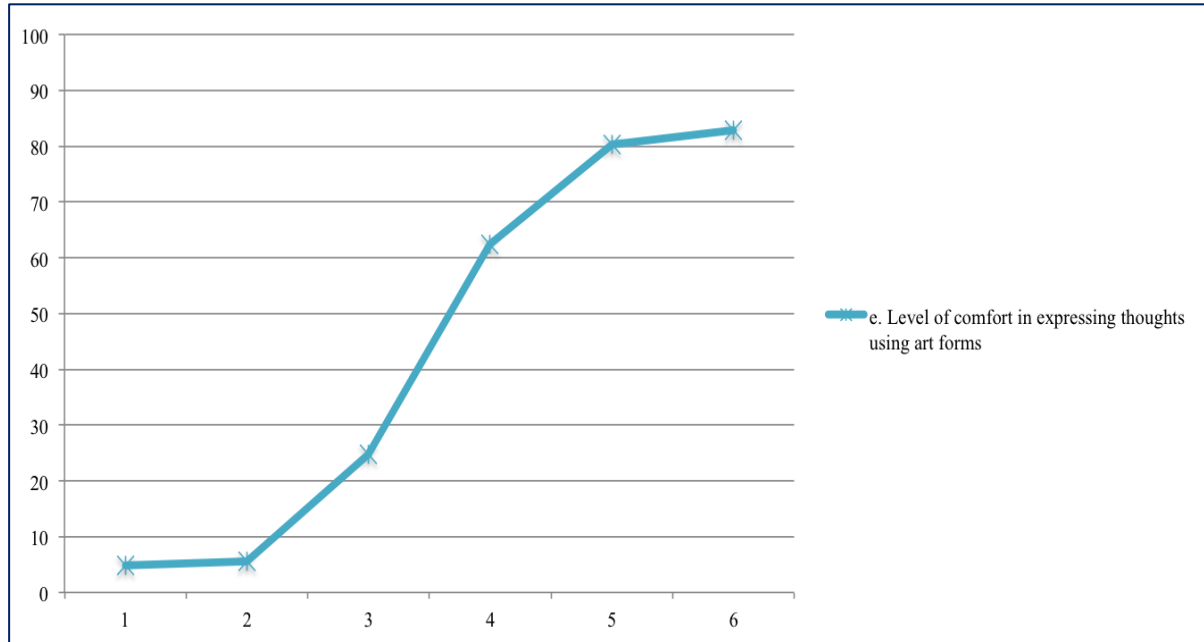
Development of Interest in Each Other's Cultures

Gradually, the students developed a better understanding of their bicultural peers, and found themselves being more proud of the cultures of their non-Korean mothers. Especially through this workshop, students viewed many slideshow presentations, video clips, and short movies on different cultures. In the survey and the interviews, students reported that they became more excited about each other's cultures through these processes. Furthermore, as a result of many of the non-Korean moms being from other Asian countries, they also reported becoming more interested in other countries and societies in Asia.

A key goal of these activities was to provide insight into students' experiences and personal narratives as well as creating an external mirror that captures each student's own identity. The survey graph shows that students' interest in other cultures improved from 8% to 75% over the course of the activities (see Figure 5).

Level of Comfort in Expressing Thoughts using Art Forms:

82% of students reported an improved level of comfort in expressing their thoughts through various art forms by the time the activity had ended (see Figure 6).

Note 1: *N* = 26. Responses were on a scale from 0 to 100. Reported values represent means across all respondents.

Note 2: Mean responses of level of comfort during activities 1 through 6

Note 3: Time indicates 6 different survey collection points. Time 1 indicates pre-activity survey administration. Time 2 indicates survey after Activity #1. Time 6 indicates survey after final Activity #5.

Figure 6. Level of comfort in expressing thoughts using art forms

Particularly after the manhwa activity in Activity 4 (see change from 20% to 60% after Activity 4), students exhibit a relatively high level of comfort with artistic expression (see Figure 6). Based on interviews with the students, many students felt much more familiar and comfortable with the arts after using natural materials from their surroundings for the Circle Activity in Activity 5 on the school field. Students reported that this was because, unlike with fine art, this activity was designed such that a variety of artistic skill levels were acceptable and useful in conveying their ideas and experiences without critique or judgment. Whereas they typically thought of fine art when thinking about "art", they felt less intimated by this activity. This suggests that educators should be careful not to intimate non-art students when conducting art activities by selecting an art form that is accessible to everyone. Contemporary art forms, such as collage, manwha, book-making, and mixed media art may be suitable options since they focus on meaning rather than form (Efland, Freedman, & Stuhr, 1996). These art-making activities helped students "explore their identities, move beyond their comfort zones, take risks, and look at things in new ways" (Song, 2009, p.23). Ultimately this helped them develop an idea of inclusive citizenship.

Through these five activities, students of dual heritage backgrounds gained knowledge about their mother's cultures and developed a sense of pride and/or understanding about their dual heritage and cultures. Students whose parents were both of Korean descent were able to develop an appreciation for others' cultures. Furthermore, students of full Korean descent began to place greater value in the fact that they had classmates with dual heritage backgrounds. "Students learned about each other by sharing their lives in ways that are sometimes absent from the curriculum" (Song & Donovan, 2013, p. 9). These findings also suggest that having several experiential activities (in this case, five) rather than just one or two was much more beneficial to students' learning. Even if students take in one particular topic, for them to develop a deeper understanding, a series of activities that tackles various angles can be much more helpful.

Conclusion

This activity incorporated a variety of activities to address the issue of diversity in a rural South Korean community. It sought to help students better understand their bicultural peers, accept diversity, and not engage in bullying and teasing behaviors. In addition, it attempted to help students develop a more open mind about other cultures. Through the activities, students were encouraged to critically think about their personal experiences and their interactions with their own and other cultures (Lovat, 2002; Song 2009). Educators may be able to develop a more comprehensive and holistic curriculum on the topic of cross-cultural education by utilizing, adapting, and expanding the constructive process and activities described above.

Expressing diverse cultural backgrounds through the activities in the classroom may allow students to develop a greater appreciation for diversity and multiculturalism (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; & Nieto, 1999). Some students came away from these activities saying "I realized that I should not be embarrassed about my mother's culture and heritage" and that "I see that being bicultural can be a positive thing too. I never thought about it." This was a new sign of self-confidence that had not been portrayed before by these students. The activities were helpful to the non-bicultural students as well by enriching their cultural perspectives beyond that of their own.

For many teachers in the classroom setting, a big challenge is to figure out how to create a useful and educational experience for a diverse group of students (Zwirn & Graham, 2005). In particular, teachers often contemplate how to design activities that encourage deep thinking in the process of carrying out the activities, rather than placing an emphasis on the activity outcome. Often times, the arts may be effective tools for multicultural education by serving these purposes. This is because the creative engagement with a problem can allow students to better explore and explain their thoughts in a way that may not be easy with words. Furthermore, the arts are particularly useful because it may serve as a common language that

can be utilized in classrooms that combine different cultures. I hope this study serves as a helpful example of a teaching method that may foster more culturally sensitive curricula that integrates diverse perspectives in delivering cross-cultural education in South Korea and beyond.

Note: Each activity participant signed an informed consent form before participating. The students' names in this paper are pseudonyms.

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