

Multicultural Education: Enhancing Business Education Students' Academic Success Using Banks' Model

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Abstract

The study examined how classroom diversity could be used to enhance business education students' academic success. The study considers the impact of multicultural education using Banks' model to enhance these students' academic success. Diversity is in different forms. As our global world and country become increasingly diversified with its attendant impact on school, campus, and classroom settings, it becomes imperative to examine ways of ensuring that students continue to enhance their academic success. Although there are challenges to both instructors and students alike in ensuring academic success in a diverse classroom setting, there are also benefits that enhance students' academic success, particularly business education students. Instructors also benefit from an enhanced understanding of their students to improve their teaching styles. The results of this study show that multicultural education helps business education students to function better in personal, social, and civil activities that are required for citizens in a diverse, democratic, and pluralistic society.

Keywords: Academic Success, Business Education, Business Students, Diversity, Banks Model

American education at all levels i.e., elementary, secondary, and tertiary (higher education) including colleges and universities, is increasingly becoming ethno-culturally diverse. Indeed, across the world, issues regarding diversity have been receiving more attention, challenging people to think in new ways (Bai et al., 2020; Banks, 2004; Banks, 2009; Banks & Banks, 2019; Castles, 2009; Ely & Thomas, 2020). The aging population in developed countries and the increasing population in developing and emerging countries of the world have further created a

demographic divide and a demand for highly skilled and educated immigrants to meet the workforce and labor needs of developed economies. Indeed, the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau (2024) revealed that the U.S. is the only developed country out of the top 10 most populous countries in the world. In the U.S., ethnic minorities are projected to increase from one-third of the nation's population as of 2006 to about 50% in 2042 (Roberts, 2008). Due to global migration and globalization, racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, equity and inclusion continue to increase in countries across the world including the U.S. (Bai et al., 2020; Banks, 2009; Castles, 2009; Frey, 2020; Jensen et al., 2021; Soetan & Nguyen, 2018; 2023).

Diversity in the U.S. is increasingly reflected in the nation's schools, colleges, and universities as well. For example, Planty et al. (2007) stated that 43 percent of the students enrolled in grades one to 12 in public schools in the U.S. were students of color. Korhonen (2023) stated that this figure has increased to 54.8 percent as of 2021. Also, in 2007, 20 percent of school age students spoke a language other than English at home (Planty et al., 2007) which implies that a significant percentage of the students in U.S. schools are English language learners. However, by 2030, about 40 percent of the students in the U.S. will speak English as a second language (Peebles, 2008).

These demographic and social diversity findings have important implications for teaching and learning and students' academic success. Therefore, increasing diversity within U.S. schools, colleges, and universities provides opportunities that could be explored and taken advantage of to enhance business education students' academic success. Diverse classrooms make it possible and easier to teach students from different cultures. These diverse classrooms provide an opportunity for instructors and students alike to enrich their knowledge, attitude, and skills in today's increasingly globalized and diversified world.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to consider or examine how classroom diversity between and amongst students on one hand and instructors in business education on the other hand could be better managed for an effective teaching and learning experience for both instructors and students. The Banks' model of multicultural education was used to examine literature on classroom diversity.

Theoretical Framework

James A. Banks is an American educator and a specialist in social studies education, multicultural education, diversity, and citizenship. His scholarly and professional work led him to develop the five dimensions of multicultural education that are parts of the Banks' model of multicultural education (Banks, 1995a). This model consists of five dimensions: Content Integration (CI), Knowledge Construction (KC), Prejudice Reduction (PR), Equity Pedagogy (EP), and Empowering School Culture and Social Structure (ESC & SS).

Content Integration (CI)

This first dimension addresses the need to include the knowledge and perspectives of other cultures in curriculum development. Four approaches to CI are:

- i. Contributions approach:* Involves providing information or examples in class topics and discussions that involve other cultural groups or places i.e., inclusion of differences and diversity.
- ii. Additive approach:* Involves building on the contributions approach through the provision of additional course content.
- iii. Transformative approach:* Involves the assumption that the construction of knowledge is both value-driven and value laden. Therefore, to include knowledge from different, several, or multiple perspectives, a strategy must be in place to permit additional and alternative views and perspectives.
- iv. Social action approach:* Involves efforts made to provide students with the needed tools and resources that enable them to contribute to the decision-making process that can lead to social change.

Knowledge Construction (KC)

This second dimension encompasses the perspectives, presumptions, and assumptions that are considered in the process of designing, constructing, and validating knowledge produced in a particular discipline. At this level, students are encouraged to take a critical approach to issues and topics that are discussed in class and ask difficult questions regarding course content in order to both develop and enhance their critical thinking skills and competencies. Instructors have a responsibility to expose students to the different and various processes that are involved in knowledge production. Furthermore, instructors must ensure that students are aware and better informed about the considerations and perspectives that inform, influence, and contribute to the production of certain types of knowledge.

Prejudice Reduction (PR)

The third dimension, Prejudice Reduction (PR), attempts to change attitudes and beliefs that are rooted in sexism, racism, stereotyping, and other forms of bias and prejudice. This dimension also helps students to value and respect differences. PR is greatly enhanced through the provision of opportunities for students from different backgrounds to work together in groups and build respect for different perspectives in a culturally diverse group. It should be noted that the classroom setting, and environment also plays a huge role in PR.

Equity Pedagogy (EP)

Equity Pedagogy (EP), the fourth dimension, assumes that students have different learning styles that are influenced by their culture, background, peculiar experiences, environment, and world views. Instructors acknowledge the differences in students' learning styles and provide opportunities for them to learn in different and meaningful ways. Instructors encourage students to think critically, since they can encourage critical thinking based on their knowledge of students' background, cultural influences, learning styles, and unique experiences.

Empowering School Culture and Social Structure (ESC & SS)

The final dimension, Empowering School Culture and Social Structures (ESC & SS), was initially developed for K-12 education, but it is also relevant to higher education. This dimension provides a framework for instructors to alter course materials and resources to accommodate different perspectives and develop appropriate instructional delivery styles and strategies that make for an all-inclusive learning culture in higher education. Indeed, ESC & SS is essential for students from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds to experience equitable and empowering learning environments in today's increasingly pluralistic and diverse world.

Research Questions

Banks' model of multicultural education provided theoretical orientations for forming two research questions for this study. The research questions addressed in this study are:

- i) How can instructors manage classroom diversity in an increasingly diverse classroom to support business education students' academic success?
- ii) What strategies can be applied to ensure deeper and better interactions and rapport between instructor and business education student diversity in the classroom?

Literature Review

Given the increasing diversity across all levels of education from elementary to higher education today, instructors need skills to better communicate with students from different cultures and backgrounds. This is very important, and the Banks' model has proved to be successful in providing the needed skills. For example, using the first dimension of the Banks' model, *Content Integration*, Akcaoglu and Arsal (2022), revealed that the model significantly improved the multicultural efficacy of instructors after training on multicultural education. Abacioglu et al., (2022) also found that instructors who received professional development in multicultural education, especially during their in-service years, had more positive attitudes and beliefs about multicultural ideologies and practices compared to instructors who did not.

Higher Education and Diversity

Business educators must understand the relevance of diversity in higher education because one of the purposes of higher education is to provide an enabling and supportive teaching and learning environment. They must embrace differences and diversity and integrate them into all areas of teaching and learning to develop inclusive education (Guo & Jamal, 2007). It is also important for higher education institutions to continue to commit resources to diversity and inclusiveness as a demonstration of their commitment given the increasing diversity that is taking place in our world today (Banks, 2009; Bowman et al., 2016; Hu and Kuh, 2003; Soetan, 2020).

Goal of multicultural education

A major goal of multicultural education is to provide students with the skills and knowledge that they need to be able to function in a diverse nation and world. Multicultural education also provides an opportunity to better educate under-achieving students and to ensure that no

student is left behind academically. Helping these students revitalizes faith and trust in the promises of democracy, equality, and justice by building educational systems that reflect diverse cultural, ethnic, racial, and social contributions. Those educational systems provide better opportunities for every student and ultimately societal advancement and progress (Garcia, 2016; Feinberg, 1996; Kymlicka, 1995; Taylor, 1992).

Challenges of multicultural education: Classroom diversity

Both instructors and students face various challenges in a diverse classroom. Diversity comes in different forms and can be based on race, sexual orientation, disability, income background, and ethnicity. Literature reveals that minority students often feel isolated and unwelcome in predominantly white classrooms, and many experience discrimination and differential treatment (Costa et al., 2021; Cress & Sax, 1998; Goudeau & Croizet, 2016; Hurtado et al., 1998; Neugebauer et al., 2021; Rankin, 2003; Triventi, 2020; Sari & Yuce, 2020; Wenz & Hoenig, 2020). Also, when female students are in the minority in class, they may experience unwelcoming climates that can include sexist use of language, stereotypic or disparaging views of women, differential treatment from instructors and male students, and/or sexual harassment. Literature also reveals that the absence of previous positive experiences for minority students causes majority class members to feel anxious about interacting with minority students, and such anxiety can cause majority students to respond with hostility or to avoid interactions with minority students (Salter & Persaud, 2003; Sands, 1998; Plant & Devine, 2003).

Benefits of multicultural education: Classroom diversity

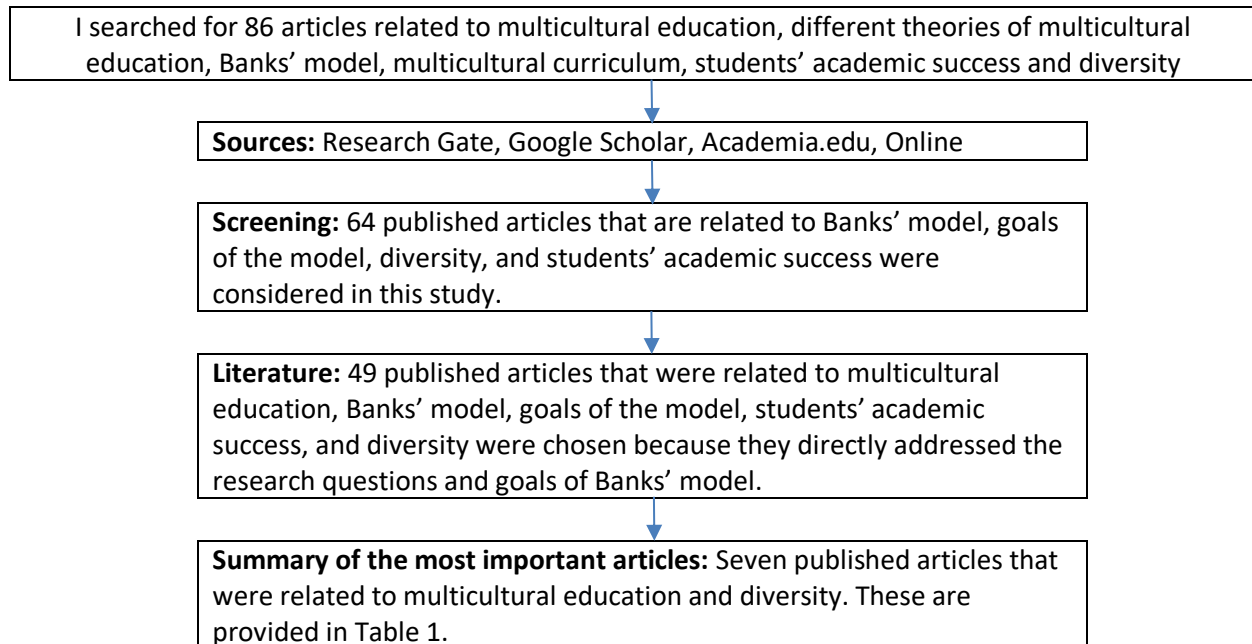
The benefits of classroom diversity in enhancing the academic success of students are enormous (Lee, 2019; Smith et al., 1997). The benefits provide students with opportunities to confront racial and multicultural issues in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. These opportunities encourage students to have meaningful engagements rather than casual and superficial interactions which lead to greater benefit from interacting with racially diverse peers. Indeed, literature reveals that scholars from minority groups have expanded scholarship and teaching in many academic disciplines by offering new perspectives, and raising new questions, challenges, and concerns. Female instructors and instructors of color more frequently employed active learning in the classroom, encouraged student input, and included perspectives of female students and minorities in their coursework (Antonio, 2002; Astin, 1993; Espenshade & Radford, 2009; Lee, 2019; Milem, 2003; Soetan & Nguyen, 2023; Turner, 2000).

Other benefits of multicultural education from literature are that it makes schooling, i.e., attending classes and lectures, more relevant for students from various backgrounds. Literature reveals that students are more successful academically when there is greater compatibility between their cultural backgrounds and school experiences such as class lectures and lessons (McCarty, 2002; Park et al., 2001). Finally, multicultural education addresses the challenges that confront many students from diverse cultural backgrounds who don't find class sessions inviting or exciting because they often feel unwelcomed and/or alienated (Gay, 2004).

Research Method

Based on the purpose of this research, a retrospective review of literature on multicultural education using the Banks' model was conducted. A substantial amount of time and focus was used to conduct literature reviews and to understand multicultural education and how it could be designed and implemented to engender business education students' academic success in the classroom. The process of my literature search is provided below in figure 1.

Figure 1: The Literature Search Process



The literature that I reviewed was mostly qualitative papers with a few quantitative as well. A summary of the most important literature is provided in Table 1. The Banks' model of multicultural education was central to this review because it provides a framework to create and provide equal opportunities for every student regardless of their background, gender, or sexual orientation. The goals of the model were used as a guideline in the analysis of the literature that I reviewed. These goals include helping students to acquire the learning skills that they need to function successfully in a diverse world, providing students with the appropriate skills, attitudes, and knowledge that they need to function effectively in both mainstream and other ethnic cultures, and designing the school or campus environment to reflect diversity in the society. After the literature review was conducted, I evaluated the dimensions and developed an understanding of how multicultural education plays a role in enhancing business education students' academic success through classroom diversity. This evaluation allowed me to have a perspective of the past, current, and future implications through this approach.

In Table 1, I provide a research table with a summary of the most important literature in this study. The most important literature provided in the table highlighted the significance and

relevance of the findings to the important topic of multicultural education. It also highlighted findings related to the Banks' model along with the dimensions of the model. The summary of the most important literature along with other literature in this study reveals the benefits and challenges of multicultural education, goal of multicultural education, and higher education and diversity.

Table 1: Summary of the Most Important Literature in this Study

Source	Title of Article	Type of Article	Findings
Abacioglu et al (2022)	Professional development in multicultural education: What can we learn from the Australian context?	Article on multicultural education. Published in a peer review journal.	Instructors who received training on multicultural education during their in-service years were better informed in their beliefs and practices regarding multicultural education.
Akcaoglu and Arsal (2022)	The effect of multicultural education on preservice teachers' attitude and efficacy: Testing Banks' Content Integration dimension.	Article on multicultural education. Published in a peer review journal.	The study revealed that the Banks' model significantly improved the knowledge and practice of multicultural education after instructors underwent professional development and training on multicultural education.
Banks (2009)	The Routledge international companion to multicultural education.	A published book on multicultural education.	Educational systems that have multicultural education embedded in their curriculum provide enhanced opportunities for students' development and society's advancement.
Costa et al (2021)	Teachers' implicit attitudes toward ethnic minorities: A systematic review.	Article on ethnic minorities and diversity. Published in a peer review journal.	Minority students which may be based on gender, race, sexual orientation, income background, or religious belief often feel isolated and unwelcome and many of them also experience discrimination and differential treatment.

Source	Title of Article	Type of Article	Findings
Guo and Jamal (2007)	Nurturing cultural diversity in higher education: A critical review of selected models.	Article on cultural diversity in higher education. Published in a peer review journal.	Three primary models of nurturing cultural diversity in higher education i.e., intercultural education model, multicultural education model, and the anti-racist education model were examined. Instructors and educators must integrate differences and diversity into curriculum to enhance inclusive education.
Lee (2019)	Bringing multiculturalism to the classroom: Voice of experience.	An online publication on multiculturalism in the classroom.	Classroom diversity provides benefits to students' academic success including opportunities for meaningful engagements rather than casual or superficial interactions.
Soetan (2020)	Impact of support areas on the perceived academic success of international students in community colleges in Canada.	Article on international students and cultural diversity in a higher education setting. Published in a peer review journal.	Higher education administrators and institutions should continue to devote more resources to multicultural education based on the increasing diversity in our world today.

Findings

The results of this study reveal that to answer the two research questions in this study, action activities and projects should be tuned to the cognitive and moral development levels of students (Banks, 1995a). Practicality and feasibility also emerged as important considerations. To enhance students' academic success in the classroom through multicultural education, students in elementary schools should be taught and encouraged to make a commitment to stop laughing at ethnic jokes that hurt or are offensive. Students in junior, middle, and secondary school levels can take action by reading books about other racial, ethnic, and sexual orientation groups such as LGBTQ. Furthermore, these students should be encouraged to participate in projects that are cross cultural and cross racial, because these projects provide enlightenment, education, and insight to others (Lee, 2019). When students engage in projects,

they learn about the country and the world from the perspectives of diverse and different groups. As a result, they will be able to participate and function better in personal, social, and civil activities that are necessary for citizens in a diverse, democratic, and pluralistic society (Banks, 2009; Guo & Jamal, 2009). Finally, actions by instructors using the Banks' model will help in developing strategies and styles that ensure much improved, deeper, and better communication and understanding between business education instructors and students. This finding agrees with (Akcaoglu & Aarsal, 2022; Abacioglu et al., 2022). The design and creation of a school or campus environment to reflect the diversity in society requires enhanced commitment from instructors and administrators to ensure that business education students function effectively and successfully both on campus and outside campus and upon their graduation based on the increasing diversity in our world today (Soetan, 2020).

Limitations to the Study

A major limitation to this study is in the eurocentric approach of the Banks' model of multicultural education. The model appears to perpetuate the analysis of multicultural education from the perspective of the majority culture. As such, it may not be realistically possible, if at all feasible, to integrate multicultural content and perspectives across all courses at every educational level, either at the elementary, secondary or tertiary levels. This, therefore, presents a challenge for instructors who may require significant professional training and development to overcome that challenge.

Conclusion

This study considered the role of business education instructors in achieving business education students' learning outcomes in a culturally diverse classroom. The study examined the need and necessity for instructors to develop all-inclusive and all-embracing teaching strategies to enhance these students' academic success in a diverse classroom setting using the Banks' model of multicultural education. The model considered the benefits and challenges of diversity, and identified ways to address those benefits and challenges. These strategies to optimize and/or maximize the benefits should acknowledge multiple sources of knowledge that are both available and valid in instructional delivery styles in a diverse classroom setting.

Diversity is a means of achieving educational and institutional goals. However, having a diverse classroom does not automatically provide a more welcoming and intellectually stimulating classroom (Fine & Handelsman, 2010). Despite the improvements that have been made in multicultural education, there is still room for improvement, particularly in today's increasingly diversified world. Therefore, the earlier the benefits of a diverse classroom in business education are taken advantage of, the faster and better the students will realize the enhanced academic success. Indeed, a consistent and continued study of the topic of classroom diversity in business education is both germane and imperative in an increasingly diverse campus and classroom setting that we have today, not only in the U.S., but across the world. Such a study serves to deepen our understanding of how students learn and interact with their colleagues and instructors to enhance their academic success.

This study considered several ways of enhancing business education students' academic success using the Banks' model of multicultural education including the role of business education instructors in achieving business education students' learning outcomes in a culturally diverse classroom, the need and necessity for instructors to develop an all-inclusive and all-embracing teaching strategies to enhance these students' academic success in a diverse classroom setting. It also examined the benefits and challenges of diversity and ways to address those benefits and challenges. However, it is recommended that further studies should consider addressing multicultural education from the perspective of a minority culture or a combination of both minority and majority culture rather than just the majority culture that the Banks' model focused on. Further studies can also explore the possibility of how multicultural content and perspectives can be better and more easily integrated across all subjects and disciplines across all levels of education from elementary to higher education. Finally, it is suggested that further research may consider ways to increase business education students' academic success using other models of multicultural education apart from the Banks' model that this study focused on.

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