

Cultural Analysis Plan

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Today's American classrooms are filled with diverse learners; students who differ in language, gender, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and race. These students enter the classroom with prior knowledge and experiences that differ from the dominant culture, and the culture of science, often causing cultural conflict for the students (Kusimo et al., 2000). It is important for a teacher to take a multicultural approach to educating and assessing students to ensure all the learning needs of their students are being met.

Creating a multicultural class begins with educators recognizing their own cultural values and biases and how these appear in their teaching methods. Asking questions such as "are multiple types of assessments used," "is group work incorporated into lessons," "are boys encouraged to answer over girls," "is storytelling important," and "is individualism valued over collectivism," helps an educator realize how one's own culture affects students and the classroom environment.

Creating a multicultural classroom begins by acknowledging and understanding the cultural beliefs of one's students. Asking the same questions about your students will help you gain a better understanding of your students' cultures and what they value.

There are actions an educator can take to better understand who their students are. Communication with parents is particularly important for beginning to understand who your students are. Find out what the culture of their household is like and invite them to share a tradition with the class. Another action is to ask a colleague from the same culture as some of your students to look over lessons or assessments to see if the language being used matches the same language as the students. A cross-cultural approach should be incorporated when teaching, and explicitly teach students how to recognize the cultural differences between their culture and

the culture of science. Then teach them how to express their thoughts in a way that matches the culture of science.

An educator in the 21st-century science classroom has a duty to provide an equal education to all students. To be successful, one must be culturally aware of their students' cultures as well as one's own. An educator must strive to meet the learning needs of all their students by providing a variety of assessments, valuing cultural differences, and teaching students how to cross cultural borders. An educator that does this provides all students in the classroom with an equitable education.

## REFERENCES

Kusimo, P., Ritter, M.G., Busick, K., Ferguson, C., Trumbull, E., Solano-Flores, G. (2000).

Making assessment work for everyone: How to build on student strengths. SEDL, 19-82.