

## **Preparing Teachers for Fair and Equitable Treatment of Diverse Groups of Students: The First Step to Human Rights Education**

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**Abstract:** Education has always been a fundamental right all children are entitled to. The provision of educational opportunities is a central means of advancing awareness of universal aspirations for diversity, tolerance and human rights. It has been a worthwhile endeavor that schools make a commitment to greater community cohesion through promoting children's awareness of human rights, and teaching diversity and tolerance. Schools have to prepare students from diverse backgrounds and communities for being responsible global citizens. The sense of dignity, understanding others, friendship and tolerance must come to the fore in educational institutions. It is true that schools reflect society; thereby, directing education to the enhancement of human rights-based norms enables children to become contributing members of a tolerant society. This article highlights the significance of living together to create a tolerant society where human rights are plentifully respected. Specifically, the paper seeks to explore the role of imparting education in teaching about human rights.

**Key Words:** Human Rights Education, Tolerance, Respect, Equitable Treatment

### **1. Introduction**

Educating ethnically, racially, and socioeconomically diverse students has been a challenging task for teachers. Students who live in diverse societies need to know that they should welcome differences among people. It is important that teachers are committed to eradicating negative attitudes students have towards each other and teaching them tolerance in a multicultural content. It has been suggested that fair and equitable treatment of all students promote understanding across diverse groups and enable them to become tolerant for diverse beliefs. Students need to know how to responsibly in diverse societies, respect other people and their opinions. There is no doubt that education must be considered a human rights issue (Lee, 2013). Every child has a right to receive education which will provide them the basic life and social skills to live a fulfilling life. In education, the evolvement of students' moral sense is a priority value that should be cherished to live responsibly in their communities. This article underlines the provision of equitable treatment of all students to create an ethos of respect which is a fundamental principle of human rights.

## 2. Literature Review

Tolerance and respect are important factors to create a tolerant society. By extension, they are fundamental values people need to function in modern diverse societies (Vogt, 1994). The assumption is that schools play a vital role in building a tolerant society (Donnelly, 2003) through delivering an ethos of respect and tolerance which serves compromise and mutual understanding. Compromise, which includes the expedient acceptance of standards that are less than you want, entails tolerance; thus, a social system built on compromise will also be built on tolerance (Vogt, 1994). With this in mind, the emphasis of schools on recognizing the diversity of cultures and values for the creation of greater community cohesion cannot be underestimated.

Fethullah Gulen (2013), who persistently values interpersonal relationship, considers tolerance to be the basis of peace and states that “tolerance bind us together” (p.77, own translation). Based on the notion that, tolerance is an underlying dynamic to come to an acceptance of differences, teachers should encourage students to build mutual understanding and recognize diversity. Gulen (2003) who combines commitment and tolerance argues that unless teachers show understanding and display tolerance towards their students, they are not likely contribute to the students’ learning experiences.

A second key point is that diversity related activities at schools lend itself to embracement of tolerance for other cultures. The crucial point to note is that schools reflect aspects of the larger society; thereby, the creation of culturally responsive teaching eradicates negative attitudes of students toward diversity and enhances their diversity-related dispositions to maintain a social group. Indeed, festivals of language and culture held by the Gulen Movement schools are conducive to the building of respect and tolerance among diverse groups of students.

Teachers take a leading role for the creation of inclusive learning environment. Developing an inclusive ethos leads students to value and respect diversity. A positive learning environment in the classroom will be created when teachers share an inclusive learning experience (Banks, 2003; Pass, 2009). In a classroom environment where all students are equally treated, students can develop understanding of others. For that reason, it is highly significant that all students should have equal value.

## 3. Conclusion

Fair treatment of students in the classroom will encourage students to respect and tolerate each other. Students will learn how live responsibly in societies. Although teaching diverse students has been a challenging task, school activities that involve students from different cultural backgrounds might play a supportive role in binding the students together. The fair and equitable treatment of all students might promote their understanding of other cultures. Embracement of cultural values from different backgrounds might enable the students to eradicate negative attitudes of students towards others. The role of schools in teaching all students how to welcome differences among individuals cannot be underestimated.

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