Title	Student teachers' perceptions about multicultural education in Singapore
Author(s)	Karen Chan Oi Khum
Source	*International Assembly at the National Council for Social Studies Conference, St. Louis, Missouri, USA, 22 - 24 November 2013*

Student Teachers' Perceptions about Multicultural Education in Singapore

Karen Chan Oi Khum

National Institute of Education

Nanyang Technological University

Abstract

This pilot study used a qualitative exploratory design to obtain the perceptions of student teachers in a post-graduate diploma in education programme (specialisation in primary level) in Singapore as to their understanding of multicultural education and practices as well as key issues for multicultural education. Open-ended questionnaires were first administered with 25 student teachers. Student teachers' perceptions of multicultural education were mostly congruent to the state's definition where multiculturalism is very much aligned with multiracialism. Six typical respondents were then purposefully selected to be interviewed to explore the responses in more depth. Data from open-ended questionnaires and interviews were analysed and three major themes emerged. The three major themes are: (1) importance of respecting differences in culture to maintain 'harmony'; (2) superficial perception of multicultural practices; and (3) concerns with instruction. Implications and recommendations for teacher education as well as future research were then discussed.

Keywords: multicultural education, perceptions, student teachers, primary level

Introduction

Singapore is experiencing unprecedented demographic changes between now and 2030 and these changes include a reduced proportion of working-age Singaporeans, longer life expectancy for older Singaporeans, low birth rates and an increase in the number of non-Singaporeans (National Population and Talent Division, 2013). According to the Population in Brief Report 2012, half of the total population increase in the last 10 years was contributed by non-Singaporeans. Chong and Cheah (2010) asserted that these demographic changes have extensive implications for schools and educators, especially so when the number of non-Singaporeans being enrolled in local schools have been increasing. In fact, it has been reported that a popular primary school in Singapore has students from 39 different nationalities (Forss, 2007). Students in Singapore classrooms today do come from varied racial, ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, gender, religious, and other cultural backgrounds. Educators should thus be interested in diversity within the classrooms in Singapore because the growing diversity indicates a need for change within the realm of education (Chong & Cheah, 2010).

An important challenge for schools today is to ensure that each and every student, regardless of his or her ethno-cultural origin, has equal chances for social economic mobility. Indeed, schools are well positioned to help build culturally inclusive communities where, students understand and appreciate diverse cultures as well as feel a sense of belonging. The concept of 'multiculturalism' as an educational goal that emphasises 'the importance of diversity' is thus essential to social cohesion (Chong & Cheah, 2010). Olmedo (1997) asserted that the real issues of multicultural education would be addressed by teachers in schools; encompassing decisions about the curriculum, selection of instructional materials as well as classroom climate and language. Teachers would need to grapple with adapting instruction to

suit students' cultural and individual preferences in order to engage students to participate in the educational process and encourage them to speak from their own experiences (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). If the curriculum is incongruous with students' beliefs and cultural norms, disengagement, misapprehension and doubt are likely to occur (Croninger, 1991).

Many researchers have noted that multicultural awareness, sensitivity and competency are essential elements of effective teacher education programmes (Artiles, Trent, Hoffman-Kipp & Lopez-Torrez, 2000; Assaf, Garza & Battle, 2010; Banks, 2008; Brown, 2007; Cartledge & Kourea, 2008; Ford & Quinn, 2010; Neito, 2000a; Richards, Brown & Forde, 2007; Stanton & Gonzalez, 2011; Taylor, 2010). Therefore, it is imperative that teacher education programmes provide opportunities for teachers to learn to manage teaching in multicultural classrooms. Zeichner and Hoeft (1995) reported that teacher education programmes seldom: (a) surface teachers' own values, stereotypes and biases; and (b) guide teachers to acknowledge that students' personal and community life have an effect on classroom teaching and learning. Knowledge and understanding of student teachers' perceptions may help teacher educators craft appropriate preparatory course for student teachers to better teach in a multicultural society like Singapore.

Literature Review

Multicultural education has created its place from a variety of constituencies. Although there are many approaches, goals and definitions of multicultural education, researchers have developed a high level of agreement about its aims and goals within the last 20 years (Banks, 2010; Banks et al., 2001; Bennett, 2001; Neito, 2000a; Parekh, 1986; Sleeter & Grant, 2007; Suzuki, 1984). Its main goal is to implement school reforms such that all students, regardless of racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, get to experience educational equity (Banks,

2004a). Multicultural education also describes diverse programmes and practices associated with educational equity, women, ethnicity, language minorities, low socio-economic status, and the disabled (Banks, 2010). In other words, consensus about its parameters has not been achieved completely (Banks, 2001; Bennett, 2001; Garcia 1998; Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). At one school, multicultural education could be just adapting a curriculum while at another, it could be a complete school reform to improve educational equity for a range of cultural, ethnic, and economic groups of students (Banks, 2010).

According to Banks' (2010), the five dimensions of multicultural education are: (a) content integration – teachers incorporate cultures in their subject area; (b) knowledge construction process – teachers guide students to comprehend how cultural assumptions influence knowledge construction; (c) prejudice reduction – lessons to help students develop positive attitudes towards differences; (d) equity pedagogy – teachers' adaptation of instruction to facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse backgrounds; and (e) an empowering school culture and social structure – school culture that promotes equity and empowers its students.

Sleeter and Grant (1987, 2010) formulated five approaches to multicultural education. (a) Teaching the exceptional and culturally different – to prepare all students to integrate into the existing school and society. This approach looks at people from culturally different backgrounds, including those with disabilities, as the main beneficiaries of multicultural practice. (b) A human relations approach – to promote unity, acceptance and tolerance among people of different groups. This approach engenders positive feelings among diverse students and aims to eliminate prejudice. (c) Single-group studies approach – to study the contributions and experiences of specific group of people usually in isolation. This approach aims to raise the social status of an

oppressed group. (d) Multicultural education approach – to emphasise education for pluralism by infusing a multicultural view pervasive in the curriculum. (e) Multicultural social justice education – to encourage social action and countersocialisation that aims to achieve equity.

Multicultural practices can be categorised as surface culture or deep culture (Holtzman, 2000; Weaver, 2000). Surface culture is represented by observable things and uncontroversial issues while deep culture reflects values, beliefs, customs as well as sensitive issues and biases (Bokhorst-Heng, 2007; Holtzman, 2000). Neito (2002) described multicultural practices in schools according to four levels and starts with tolerance where there is assimilation; differences are accepted but not necessarily embraced. The second level is acceptance where the value of diverse cultures is acknowledged. The third level is respect where diversity is admired and held in high esteem. The final level is affirmation, solidarity and critique where there is reflection and development of own perspectives as well as construction of knowledge from multicultural education.

Little attention has been paid to student teachers' prior knowledge, beliefs and perceptions of multicultural education when looking into the need for multicultural teacher education. In examining teacher beliefs and thinking, teachers' conceptions of the nature of teaching and learning form the basis for the decisions they make in the classroom, and the mismatch between personal beliefs and modules offered in their teacher education programme can lead to student teachers' dissatisfaction with the programme (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985). Therefore, teacher educators should prepare multicultural educators by first examining what student teachers understand by multicultural education and its practices (Goodwin, 1990; Grant & Saceda, 1990). The theoretical frameworks mentioned above will be used as analytic tools to conceptualise student teachers' responses.

Defining Multicultural Education in Singapore

      'Multiculturalism' in Singapore is described as 'multiracialism' and this term is used specifically to accentuate the Singapore government's position on race relations which is that the relationship between society, culture, race, ethnicity and the individual as indubitable equivalent (Benjamin, 1976; Hill & Lian, 1995). Singaporeans are ascribed to a specific race at birth, indicated in their birth certificates, thereafter their identity cards and reinforced through various public policies (Tan, 2012). This way of categorising or segregating Singaporeans ignores the notion that racial identity can be shaped by the differences in religion, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexuality and class, hinders interaction and reinforces differences among ethnic groups (Loomba, 2005; Tan, 2004). This actually encourages stereotyping and overgeneralisations as there is a high chance for the majority ethnic Chinese group in Singapore, for example, to classify individuals from Sumatra and Bangladesh representing Malay and Indian 'cultures' respectively (Wee, Harbor & Shepardson, 2006).

      While the Singapore government has been able to maintain peace and harmony through its political, social and economic policies, it does not discuss multicultural education as a mainstream issue nor deal with the issue in depth. Chua (2003) saw living in 'harmony' as a public good that is being utilised as deterrence for public debate and discourse of issues that concretise multiculturalism in practice. The consequence is a 'racial harmony' that looks at the superficial and maintained by tolerance of differences. People are just comfortable with mutually tolerating. There is the absence of meaningful cultural exchange and deep understanding and would consider issues pertaining to 'race' as 'sensitive' that are best not to be publicly discussed (Chua, 2003).

The concept of 'tolerance' of differences implies 'respect' for diversity and this concept is being socialised in schools through the learning of societal values and norms of one's society (Bryan & Vavrus, 2005). Chong and Cheah (2010) argued that education has been leveraged upon to foster tolerance and exacerbate intolerance in many places in the world. With the heightened awareness of issues and events around the world in an era of globalisation assisted by the internet and social media, one would wonder if education in Singapore can continue to reduce intolerance and promote moral inclusion which emphasises on being fair, sharing of resource and being concern for the well-being of all (Opotow, Gerson & Woodside, 2005).

Research on Perceptions of Multicultural Education in Singapore

Though, internationally, the discourse on multicultural education has been going on for the past three decades, research in multicultural education in Singapore only began to appear in the early 21st century. Since then, few empirical studies had been conducted to investigate multicultural education in Singapore, especially those that focus on perspectives of student teachers on multicultural education. The study of student teachers' perceptions of multicultural education has not been fully explored with relatively few past investigations that involved samples of in-service teachers and students. The investigations were predominantly qualitative.

The research on 4,390 primary school children in six primary schools used a survey and naturalistic observations of children over a six-month period. The finding is that there was a tendency for primary school children to group themselves by race in informal settings (Lee at al., 2004). This has implications on segregation of the population in Singapore based on racial lines. By naturalistic observations, individual and group interviews of 24 students from three secondary schools, Ho (2010) found that none of the students were critical of the division of Singaporeans into racial categories. Nichol and Sim (2007) noted through ethnographic research

on 300 undergraduate and 50 postgraduate students that tensions and stereotypes among different cultural groups exist with a need for more empathy, appreciation and respect for other cultures and religions to be developed. Berthelsen and Karuppiah (2011) investigated the understandings of multicultural education of 55 in-service preschool teachers in Singapore by analysing inductively the responses to a questionnaire using the principles of grounded theory, taking into account similarities and differences across participants' responses. Similarly, Alviar-Martin and Ho (2011) examined six in-service secondary school teachers' perspectives of diversity and multicultural education in Singapore through a qualitative instrumental case study approach. Both researches showed implications in professional development to focus on teachers' biases and beliefs because of a strong positive correlation between personal beliefs and professional behavior and decision making. The closest parallel to this study would be the research done by Khoo and Lim (2004) who surveyed 348 student teachers enrolled in the various programmes in NIE on their stereotypes of the ethnic groups in Singapore. This study reported that student teachers who are less aware of their own ethnic attitudes and stereotyping may unconsciously help perpetuate such stereotypes rather than nip them in the bud. Therefore, similar with the in-service teachers, student teachers' biases and beliefs should be surfaced during teacher education programmes.

Based on the six studies, the gaps would include the lack of data collected from student teachers who will teach in the primary schools and what these student teachers perceive as multicultural practices as well as key issues for multicultural education. This study will specifically shed light on the perceptions of student teachers, specialising in teaching Social Studies to primary school students, currently enrolled in a post-graduate diploma in education

programme on multicultural education in Singapore to surface key issues as well as make recommendations to the teacher education programme.

This study is grounded in the view that purposeful multicultural education starts with teacher self-cognizance (Goodwin, 1990; Ramsey, 1987). It is significant in three ways. First, it provides teacher education programmes, in particular the postgraduate diploma in education programme, with recommendations to inform teacher educators about the type of experiences that could be incorporated in the teacher education programmes to help sensitise students to cultural diversity (Howell, 1997). Second, the key issues raised by student teachers would also benefit teacher education programmes on how to prepare student teachers to be effective educators in culturally diverse classrooms. Third, this is the first study of student teachers who will be specialising in teaching primary school children in Singapore.

Research questions

The research questions that are addressed in this study are:

- What do student teachers understand as multicultural education?

- What do student teachers perceive as multicultural practices?

- What key issues do student teachers feel need to be addressed for multicultural education?

Method

To answer the research questions, a qualitative exploratory study was used, comprising open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire data was intended to elicit codes and themes from the initial responses aligned to the research questions as well as highlight any areas that appear to emerge as significant, while the interviews were crafted to refine and explain the responses by obtaining the more personal side of student teachers'

experience and perceptions of multicultural education. The interviews will give thick descriptions on student teachers' perceptions (Creswell, 2012).

First, the participants were identified as a group of student teachers in the same cohort who were currently offering their last few modules in their teacher education before going out to schools for their teaching practice. Purposeful sampling strategy was carried out as individuals were purposefully or intentionally selected to learn about their perceptions (Creswell, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The next step was to gain access to these individuals by obtaining permissions. The participants were informed of the purpose of the information sought, that their participation was voluntary and there were no risks involved in the participation. Once permissions were in place, open-ended questionnaires were administered. Data collection was administered with special attention to potential ethical issues that might arise. Qualitative data collection consisted of collecting data using forms with general, emerging questions to permit the participants to generate responses; gathering word (text) data, and collecting information from a small number of individuals. The aim of this qualitative inquiry was not to generalise to a population, but to develop an in-depth understanding of student teachers' conceptions of multicultural education in Singapore.

Based on the responses from the open-ended questionnaires in the first qualitative phase, codes and themes were surfaced for interviews to be conducted. An interview protocol for collecting and recording information was then formulated. A multiple case study design was used in the second qualitative phase which was the priority in this study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Multiple cases serve the purpose of illuminating a particular issue and in this case, perceptions of multicultural education (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 1995). The unit of analysis was a student teacher in a postgraduate diploma in education programme, specialising in Social Studies

at the primary level. Each case study was bounded by one individual and by the time he or she

offers the last Social Studies module before going for his or her teaching practice. Figure 1

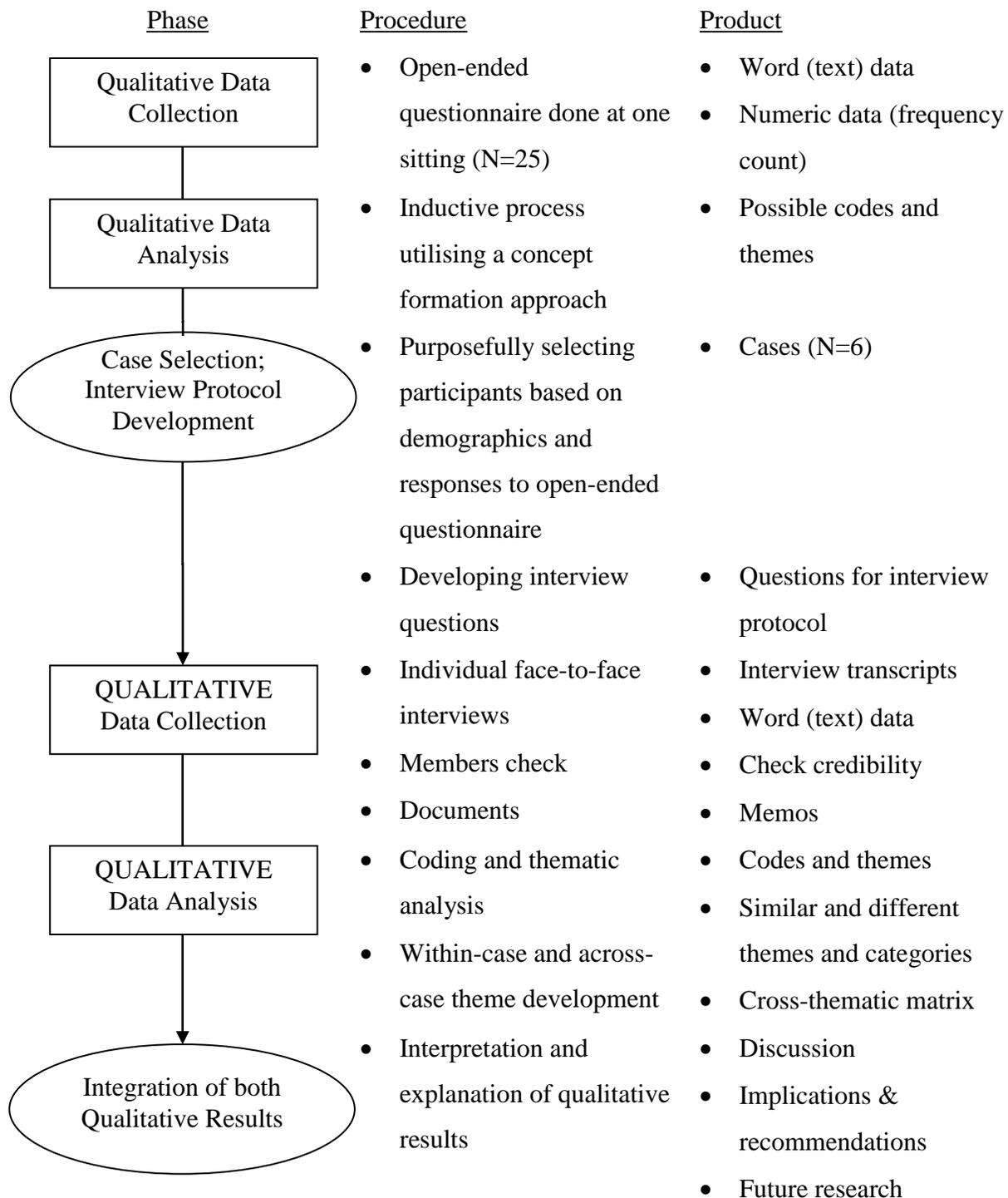shows a diagram of the qualitative exploratory design in the study.

Phase	Procedure	Product
Qualitative Data Collection	• Open-ended questionnaire done at one sitting (N=25)	• Word (text) data • Numeric data (frequency count)
Qualitative Data Analysis	• Inductive process utilising a concept formation approach	• Possible codes and themes
Case Selection; Interview Protocol Development	• Purposefully selecting participants based on demographics and responses to open-ended questionnaire • Developing interview questions	• Cases (N=6) • Questions for interview protocol
QUALITATIVE Data Collection	• Individual face-to-face interviews • Members check • Documents	• Interview transcripts • Word (text) data • Check credibility • Memos
QUALITATIVE Data Analysis	• Coding and thematic analysis • Within-case and across-case theme development	• Codes and themes • Similar and different themes and categories • Cross-thematic matrix
Integration of both Qualitative Results	• Interpretation and explanation of qualitative results	• Discussion • Implications & recommendations • Future research

Figure 1. Diagram of qualitative exploratory design.

Participants

A sample group of 25 student teachers from the same cohort in a post-graduate diploma in education programme was identified. They have chosen to teach in the primary track and opted to offer Social Studies as their third Curriculum Studies, in addition to English and Mathematics. This would be their last module in Social Studies before heading out to schools for their teaching practice. They had no prior modules on multicultural education as this last module in Social Studies was the closest to multicultural education in their teacher education programme. The majority of them (68%) are in the 20-29 age group with 20% in the 30-39 age group and 12% in the 40-49 age group. There were 20 female and 5 male with 2 Indians, 3 Malays, 17 Chinese, 2 Javanese and 1 Dutch (80% female and 20% male; 68% in the majority Chinese and 32% of the minority ethnicity). Majority (36%) are Christians with Islam and Buddhism at 24% each and the minority practicing Taoism and Hinduism. One respondent had no religious affiliation. The student teachers represented a cross-section of teachers in Singapore by age and ethnicity. These student teachers obtained their first degree in a variety of disciplines such as Mathematics, Economics, Psychology, Political Science, Statistics, Philosophy, International Relations, Linguistics, Engineering, Social Work, Business Administration, Sociology, Real Estate and Building, English, Communication and New Media. Most had no prior experience in attending conferences or workshops on multicultural education with only three indicating that they had. However, all have indicated that they have had experiences working and studying in multicultural environments. They felt that they have been exposed to a very diverse multicultural environment, given Singapore's diverse communities, for most of their lives.

Instrument

Since the sample size was small and this was a qualitative research study, open-ended questionnaires and interviews were chosen with the intent to capture student teachers' written and verbal conceptions of multicultural education in Singapore. The questionnaires were distributed during the last part of their first lesson of their last module in Social Studies so that what would be taught in the module would not influence their responses. The questionnaires asked the student teachers of their background in terms of their profile as well as their experience with multicultural environments. Student teachers then described their understanding of multicultural education in Singapore, articulated the two most important purposes of multicultural education, identified multicultural practices they had perceived to have observed or used, and listed two questions on issues pertaining to multicultural education. Limiting to two responses for two questions would likely capture respondents' goal priorities or pressing concerns respectively and distinguish responses of more garrulous from those of more terse respondents. Student teachers returned 25 completed questionnaires.

Case Selection

A systematic two-stage case selection procedure was then used. During the first stage, each of the respondents was assigned a code number and respondents were identified by their responses to the questionnaire to include typical answers and the outliers. The goal was to narrow down from the 25 questionnaires to a sample of interview participants.

During the second stage, only six 'best participants' were pulled and marked as potential interview participants to provide in-depth explanation to their perceptions of multicultural education. The participants have different demographic characteristics such as, age, gender,

ethnicity, religious affiliations, discipline in their first degree and experiences attending

workshops on multicultural education, which allowed for different perspectives on multicultural

education. This procedure yielded three male and three female respondents. Another factor that

influenced the choice of participants was the accessibility to their in-depth verbal views. These

potential interviewees were emailed and asked for their participation in a mutually convenient

30-minutes in-depth interview schedule on a variety of subjects relating to their experiences,

beliefs and attitudes towards multicultural education. All six agreed to participate. Each

participant was interviewed once in English. The purpose of these interviews was to enable

participants to candidly speak their thoughts and enable 'thick description' to enrich and validate

the data collected from the questionnaires (Geertz, 1973). They allowed the researcher to

qualitatively examine and elucidate emerging themes.

Interview Protocol Development

The content of the interview protocol was based on the qualitative results from the

questionnaires. Two open-ended questions explored how student teachers defined multicultural

education, contextualised in the Singapore society and whether the teachers were conscious of

issues of individual or structural prejudice and inequality between different groups of people.

One open-ended question explored how student teachers conceptualised the pedagogical

multicultural practices in their future classrooms, and focused on the content, skills, attitudes and

values that they choose to focus in their lessons. The last open-ended question elicited what

student teachers perceive as key issues for multicultural education. The interview protocol was

pilot tested on one participant, purposefully selected from those who had completed the

questionnaires. As a result, an opportunity for interview participants to elaborate on their

schooling background in terms of multicultural environments and more probing questions were

included.

Data Collection and Analysis

   The data was collected from a few sources to provide the richness and depth of each case

description and included: (1) responses to the open-ended questionnaires; and (2) in-depth semi-

structured face-to-face interviews with six participants. The data collection took place over two

weeks. Questionnaires collected were completed in class after 30 minutes where student teachers

wrote down their own perceptions and not perceptions obtained after doing some research. Data

was then analysed through an inductive process utilising concept formation approach as well as a

frequency count to surface emerging codes and themes which helped to formulate the interview

questions. Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed verbatim (Creswell, 2012). The

advantage of using a tape recorder was that it reduces the tendency of the interviewer to make an

unconscious selection of data favouring her biases. This analysis was performed at two levels:

within each case and across the cases (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Steps in the qualitative data

analysis included: (1) identifying the emerging codes and themes by reading through the

responses in the questionnaire; (2) initial investigation of the data by reading through the

interview transcripts and writing memos; (3) coding the data by categorising and labeling text;

(4) using codes to develop themes by putting similar codes together; (5) joining and interrelating

themes; (6) crafting a case study narrative composed of descriptions and themes; and (7) cross-

case analysis. Credibility and trustworthiness of the findings was achieved by triangulating

different sources of information, inter-coder agreement, rich and thick descriptions of the cases,

reviewing, resolving and disconfirming evidence (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Miller, 2002;

Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995).

The Researcher

As qualitative data analysis is basically dependent on the researcher's interpretation, the researcher should recognise and surface biases, values and personal interests (Creswell, 2003). I was familiar with some of the participants as I was their tutor in the previous semester. This enhanced my understanding of the context of some of the participants and improved my ability to relate to those whom I know. Being a Singaporean primary school teacher, I was also familiar with the nuances of the multicultural nature of Singapore's society as well as the codes and meanings attributed by the participants to various concepts. However, there were prejudices I brought to the study because of my professional, educational and personal background. This shaped the way I collected and interpreted data, including selection of themes and identification of patterns. Though being familiar with some of the participants and context was beneficial, this could also have possibly resulted in the exclusion of some important insights.

Advantages and Limitations

The advantage of this research method is that there are opportunities for in-depth and detailed exploration of the qualitative results obtained albeit a small sample size which means that this data cannot be used to make assumptions beyond this cohort of student teachers (Creswell, 2012). Open-ended questionnaires were used instead of surveys because the former allowed respondents to include demographic and contextual information that can be used more readily for secondary analysis. Respondents could create the options for responding without being forced into response possibilities by eliciting their feelings, beliefs, experiences, perceptions and attitudes towards multicultural education. Moreover, the open-ended questions had to be read carefully before answering rather than being 'filled in' with the same answers. However, it would not be easy to compare the meanings of the responses if there is a wide

variety of differing responses that are highly subjective. For the purpose of identifying three themes for this study, open-ended questions were analysed quantitatively with a frequency count, in which case the qualitative information would be reduced to coding and the responses would lose much of their initial meaning.

Compared to observations, interviews provided more useful information by permitting participants to share comprehensive personal information and there was better control of the types of information obtained because the interviewer could ask particular questions to draw out relevant information (Creswell, 2012). Members check was done with the interviewer questioning the participants' response in the questionnaire to determine accuracy. However, interviews might give information 'filtered' through the perceptions of the interviewer where the researcher, who can also be the interviewer, summarises the participants' views in a research report.

Interview data, similar to observation data, may be misleading and the interviewees might share only what they think the researcher wanted to hear as the researcher used to be the tutor of three of the six interviewees. They might provide politically correct answers, in anticipation to see if the researcher would agree or disagree with their responses. The researcher is the instrument and the skills of the researcher are important when conducting interviews as the researcher interacts and collaborates with the participants as well as gathers data on his or her own. Thus, the researcher being present in the interview may influence how interviewees respond. Moreover, interviewee responses may need to be inferred by the researcher as they may not be articulate, perceptive or clear. Some attention needs to be given to the conversation with participants, like using icebreakers to encourage individuals to talk as one-on-one interviews would only be fruitful if participants are forthcoming with their views.

The credibility of student self-reports could have been enhanced through integration and triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data rather than just relying solely on student self-reported qualitative data. Observations could be done to take note of actions and discussions that occur during tutorials to further circumvent the 'halo effect' when students report on their own perceptions of multicultural education. Student teachers would provide more meaningful perspectives should the research take into account the classroom experience during teaching practice but this could not be done due to the period of research which would have ended by the time the student teachers completed their teaching practice.

Findings

From Open-ended Questionnaires

The respondents were compared on the following demographic characteristics: age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliations, discipline in their first degree and experiences attending workshops on multicultural education. The typical respondents were between 20 to 29 years of age, female, Chinese, Christians, with Science or Business disciplines and had no experience attending training on multicultural education.

All the respondents were positive about multicultural education and acknowledged its importance as they recognise that the Singapore society is diverse. Student teachers were asked *What does multicultural education mean to you? What, in your opinion, are the two most important goals multicultural education should seek to accomplish in a typical primary school classroom in Singapore? Why?* The largest group of responses (24 out of 25 respondents – 96%) emphasised affective outcomes as the goal of multicultural education with 15 (60% of respondents) stating respecting, seven (28%) accepting, seven (28%) tolerating and seven (28%) appreciating differences for the purpose of 'living in harmony'. 92% (23 out of 25) of

respondents indicated that multicultural education is about getting children to know different

cultures with 13 (52% of respondents) indicating understanding, 11 (44%) learning and 10 (40%)

being aware of different cultures. Interestingly, the focus was on content knowledge of the

differences with none mentioning similarities. 32% (Eight out of 25) of respondents looked at

multicultural education as a purpose for social change with four (16% of respondents) seeking to

'live in harmony', three (12%) wanting to eliminate bias and racism and one (4%) reaching for a

common understanding.

Student teachers had to *list multicultural practices you have observed or implemented in*

multicultural environments. The largest group of respondents (23 out of 25 - 92%) listed

celebration of events through the '3Fs': "Food, Fashion and Festival" as multicultural practices

(Ismail, 2007). One (4% of respondents) identified interactions with people of different cultures

while another identified the effort to make announcements in the different languages. There was

one respondent who did not indicate that she had observed or implemented any multicultural

practices. The multicultural practices listed were all superficial in nature and did not go beyond

the '3Fs' to critically understand the complexity of multiculturalism .

Student teachers responded to the questions *When you think about multicultural*

education, what are the two questions you would like answered before you begin teaching?

Why? The largest group of responses (13 out of 25 respondents – 52%) revealed instructional

concerns about resources, strategies and coverage, how much should the teachers cover and how

to deal with sensitive issues. 48% (12 out of 25) of respondents were concerned with the context

which depends on where and whom one will teach, what is the background of the students. Four

(16% of respondents) would like to first learn about the different cultures and have doubts if they

would be able to teach confidently. Overall, responses to the questionnaire showed that though

the student teachers acknowledged the importance of multicultural education, their perceptions on multicultural education lack depth. Critical inquiry was not mentioned at all as being important in multicultural education. Analysis of the open-ended questionnaires yielded three major themes related to participants' perceptions of multicultural education in Singapore: (a) respecting differences in culture to maintain 'harmony'; (b) superficial perception of multicultural practices; and (c) concerns with instruction.

From Interviews

Six cases from the interviews reinforced the themes surfaced and the description of the cases according to themes follows.

Respecting differences in culture to maintain 'harmony'

Participants generally felt that multicultural education is about respecting differences in culture. Ali said that multicultural education is important for students to "respect" differences by having that "knowledge and awareness" in cultural practices so as not to "cause conflict". Apparently, knowledge and understanding of different cultures was important for this respect to be inculcated to maintain harmony which Siti saw as being "a functional tool in society". Participants used various terms such as "peace", "makes everything harmonious", "ensuring stability" and "not causing conflict" to denote 'harmony'. Similarly, David indicated that inculcating that "mutual respect" to "maintain harmony" through "head knowledge" is important in multicultural education. David added that "you don't need to know why. You just need to accept it (the differences in culture) and as long as it doesn't cause you any problem (and) you don't do anything wrong". Casey had the same sentiments when he said that "we are just enforcing the rule even though we might not be educated on the reason behind it". This seems to

connote that so long as there is 'harmony', one need not need to critically question but to follow without deep understanding.

When probed on participants' understanding of culture, most linked culture with race, language and religion which Jane said forms one's "identity". Jane felt that the different cultures in Singapore "are differentiated by race", Ali mentioned "a little bit of the religion part" and Siti indicated that "culture is mainly language". Interestingly, there was this dimension of nationality being associated with culture. Vanee recognised that "there is diversity beyond the four races, especially with new migrants and more nationalities living in Singapore now". David had similar sentiments when he said that culture is "closely tied to nationality". Responses to what makes up the cultures of Singapore are closely aligned with their concept of culture and most listed the cultures aligned with the races found in Singapore. Ali stated that the different cultures in Singapore are "the Indian, the Malay, the Chinese … the Peranakan, and then the Eurasian".

Superficial perception of multicultural practices

Participants listed examples of multicultural practices at the events level, mainly practices that are visible with racial harmony day, which is a day set aside in Singapore schools to commemorate the race riots that happened on 21 July 1965, being identified quite prominently as a multicultural practice in schools. Ali identified getting students to "demonstrate day-to-day greetings and table manners" while he felt that knowing about "festivals" and celebrating "racial harmony" day in the curriculum are sufficient multicultural practices to help students "respect" one another. Siti also listed racial harmony day as a multicultural practice because "you celebrate that occasion so everyone comes in their traditional costumes … students … brought food … games they play". Jane listed the activity of sharing "the things that we eat (food)" to know "differences" and "what other cultures likes and practise". Though she acknowledged that what

she listed would "not" provide a "deep understanding but … it's a first step". Indeed, most did

acknowledge that these are "superficial" but as what David said "at least it starts the ball

rolling".

Participants mentioned that interactions among people of different cultures would be a

multicultural practice to provide "true understanding". Ali agreed that students need to "have a

chance to interact with other races" to "inculcate respect". Casey also said that he would "get

students to share their experiences and what they like about their own cultures" and that is just

"knowledge but you are hearing it first-hand". To move beyond "acknowledging", which Vanee

conceded was "above tolerating", towards "appreciation and respect", she indicated that students

should "interact and be open to communicating with a diverse group of people". In addition, she

said that she would leverage on "teachable moments", incidences where she can educate her

students about respecting one another. Something that Siti also mentioned she had done before

when "the Chinese boy commented about an Indian girl being smelly" because "she put coconut

oil on her hair". She managed to explain about the coconut oil being "good for your hair and they

sort of like thought that the girl was so smart".

Concerns with instruction

Some participants were mainly concerned with what to 'cover' in the curriculum. David

asked for the "baseline of cultures to be educated" as "this helps the teacher know how much

material they have to cover and plan". Vanee indicated that she found it difficult to "balance

similarities and differences" between cultures as she felt that "when differences are highlighted,

especially with race and religion, this causes segregation rather than harmony". She was not sure

about the amount of information on multiculturalism that should be taught to students. "Being

open-minded" would be "the most fundamental" attitude that she would need to have when teaching multicultural education.

Having more knowledge about different cultures and finding out about students' backgrounds would be some ways in which teachers can prepare themselves to teach multicultural education. Ali said that he needed to have enough knowledge so that he could share what he knows with his students. Casey identified that "the challenge will be when to teach" multicultural education. Similar to Ali, he added that "you must first be aware of their differences" and "try to infuse lessons into such opportunities". Siti also seemed to be more concerned with finding out her students' prior knowledge and would leverage on "teachable moments". As such, she felt that she would need to "know … the different … unique way of doing things for the different culture(s)" so that she can explain to her students. Jane was not prepared to teach multicultural education because she doesn't "know the answers" and "how to prepare" and she needed to "find out more about how to deal" with sensitive issues. She just knew that she should "treat … my students fairly". Others felt that providing students with the experiences of being in a multicultural environment in class would be a good strategy. Ali said that "the best strategy is real life experience" but was concerned about how to go about bringing the experience to class.

Despite having three common themes pertaining to multicultural education, those themes differed in the number and similarity of sub-themes and categories comprising them. Table 1 shows the themes, sub-themes and categories across cases.

Table 1

Themes, sub-themes and categories across cases

Theme, Sub-Themes	David	Ali	Siti	Jane	Casey	Vanee
Respect differences in culture to maintain 'harmony'						
Perception of cultures that make up Singapore	Closely tied to nationality and about language and festivals of the different races in Singapore	Is equal to race and encompasses food, festivals and religion of the different races in Singapore	Mainly language and not race	Subset of race; differentiated by race which encompasses celebrations and food of the different races in Singapore	More than race but closely linked to the races found in Singapore	Overlaps with race and is beyond the four races to include nationalities living in Singapore
How to maintain 'harmony'	Mutual respect attained through head knowledge and don't need to know rationale	Respect differences through knowledge and awareness	Understand and appreciate different practices and be less ethnocentric	Being open to share to understand, accept and tolerate	Respect and follow 'rules' even though rationale is not known	Open-mindedness towards different cultures through knowledge

Theme, Sub-Themes	David	Ali	Siti	Jane	Casey	Vanee
Superficial perceptions of multicultural practices						
Examples of multicultural practices	Language, festivals and closely tied to nationality	Greetings, table manners, festival and racial harmony in curriculum	Language, practices and religion	Food and racial harmony day which include costumes and games	Sharing by students about own cultures	Festivals (well known and lesser known)
Interactions	Interactions for true understanding	Need to have a chance to interact with other races to inculcate respect	Date someone of different race (interaction)		Get students to share experiences about their own cultures	Interact and be open to communicating with a diverse group of people
Reasons for acknowledging to no deep understanding	At least it starts the ball rolling	Festivals and racial harmony in the curriculum is sufficient to help student respect one another		It's a first step	Hearing first-hand accounts	

Theme, Sub-Themes	David	Ali	Siti	Jane	Casey	Vanee
Concern with instruction						
Curriculum	Not sure of the baseline of cultures to be taught	Need to have knowledge to share with students	Find out students' prior knowledge to	Find out how to deal with sensitive issues	When to teach multicultural education	Need to have balance between similarities and differences
Experiences		Real life experiences important but how to bring to class	Leverage on teachable moments		Infuse multicultural education into opportunities that happen in class	Leverage on teachable moments

Discussion of findings

Student teachers' perceptions of multicultural education echoed the state's narrow definition where multiculturalism is very much aligned with multiracialism that focused on language, race and religion and do not reflect individuals' complex affiliations, unique identities and experiences (Banks, 2004, 2008a; Ladson-Billings, 1994). There was, however, some recognition of cultural pluralism and the demographic changes through immigration within the Singapore society as well as increase in inter-racial marriages when a few student teachers included different nationalities as the different cultures that are found in Singapore; other than the usual CMIO (Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Others) rhetoric which is a classification system used by the state to assign racial identity (Alviar-Martin & Ho, 2011; Chong & Cheah, 2010).

The CMIO rhetoric in Singapore has managed to diminish the rich diversity into four racial categories in a multicultural model that is reductive and accomplished through homogenization and focus on national identity that is rationalised under the notion of 'racial harmony' (Bokhorst-Heng, 2007; Chua, 2003). Chua (2003) noted that younger Singaporeans see themselves as Singaporeans first, not by race. As such, acknowledging that diversity includes other nationalities had created an 'us versus them' tension between Singaporeans and new citizens from other countries. One student teacher noted that "the local Chinese … don't identify … with the PRCs (a colloquial term for the Chinese who come from the People's Republic of China)".

The majority of the student teachers would want to see students respect differences in culture through knowledge acquisition, which is what Banks (2010) termed as prejudice reduction and akin to Sleeter and Grant's (1987, 2010) human relations approach. Johnson and Johnson (2002) agreed that biases and stereotyping can be reduced through knowledge,

education and support. Content knowledge seems to be the means towards an end of achieving respect for differences in culture. Though the emphasis seems to be on respect, the affective, student teachers still stated the importance of cognitive skills and knowledge which corresponds to Sleeter and Grant's (1987, 2010) teaching-the-exceptional-and-the-culturally-different approach. This aligns with the CMIO rhetoric where one sacrifices individuality in favour of a national identity. In examining how student teachers explicated respect, it seems to correspond more with Neito's (2002) tolerance level where differences are accepted but not embraced. These perceptions of multicultural education, if allowed to continue, would be quite troubling as it would be challenging for teachers to continue to subordinate individual ethnic identities to national identity as the society and schools gets more and more diverse.

The purpose of multicultural education cited by the student teachers was very much aligned with the state's utilitarian and pragmatic rationale of maintaining 'harmony'. This finding supports a prevalent view that multicultural education is a result of racially heterogeneous settings (Goodwin, 1994). That none of the student teachers identified social change or critical analysis as the purpose of multicultural education, suggests the naive assumption that the cause-effect relationships exist without thinking critically nor investigating (Sleeter & Grant, 2010). Student teachers have conformed to a cultural hegemony which marginalises people who are not favoured in a society like the minorities and this could lead to resistance which would make teaching and learning more difficult in a classroom. Multicultural education has an opportunity to be counter-hegemonic for issues to be raised in the classrooms so that students are more questioning about the status quo (Erickson, 2010; Sleeter & Grant, 2010). Erickson (2010) added that schools should teach students how to help the society reach excellence and equity in all areas of life by engaging in social action.

Student teachers' responses on multicultural practices indicated that they were aware that they listed events at a superficial level. It was observed that examples of multicultural practices surfaced corresponded with the content laid out in the 2012 Primary Social Studies syllabus. Student teachers felt that having some exposure and awareness albeit superficial is "a first step" that can be built upon and better than having none at all. This perception of multicultural practices is surface culture which stands in contrast to deep culture (Holtzman, 2000; Weaver, 2000). Surface culture represents visible form of culture like attire, food, language, music, dance and cultural artifacts while deep culture represents the less visible form of culture like assumptions, beliefs, and customs of people. This is the 'food and festival' or 'heroes and holidays' approach to multicultural education (Banks, 2001; Neito, 2000). Not only do these practices not get at the heart of cultural meanings, they would encourage stereotypes and attenuate the real issues in multiculturalism (Bokhorst-Heng, 2007).

When probed further, many felt that interactions among people of different cultures were important for students to acquire a "true" understanding of the differences in cultures. Most of the student teachers subscribed to teaching of the exceptional and culturally different (Sleeter & Grant, 1987; 2010). All multicultural practices identified indicated that there was culturally specific knowledge that all students should learn and for this knowledge to be taught in ways that students would understand and learn, positioned as a reaction to differences.

These approaches are insufficient for reaching equity and equality as they do not discuss structural inequities deep-rooted in a society (Sleeter & Grant, 1987, 2007). These student teachers who subscribed to these approaches, would proceed to be beginning teachers and unwittingly perpetuate the status quo. Freire (1973) argued that these people believe that they have no ability to change the way the world works for them in a stratified society which would

not help in preparing Singapore's future generation to be "future-ready", to "think critically,

assess options and make sound decisions" to "contribute actively to the community" (MOE,

2010, annex C).

The student teachers were concerned with what and how to teach as well as who they will

teach. They were worried about how they would be able to deal with students' misconceptions

and questions and one way to help them do this was to acquire more knowledge on

multiculturalism and skills development. Multicultural education becomes a strategy for adding

content to curriculum, fundamentally procedural or technical, requiring only knowing and doing

(Banks, 2008; Goodwin, 1994). However, they were not able to identify the specific skills and

knowledge needed to incorporate multicultural education into their instructional repertoire

though they did mention being 'open-minded' was a disposition that is important in multicultural

education. In other words, they have no idea how to teach multicultural education in schools.

Most student teachers did not raise the need to reflect on their own biases, attitudes,

beliefs and values, and how these would affect their teaching and learning. Howard (2003)

asserted that teachers must first reflect on their own affiliations and identities before they would

realise how cultural differences affect the learning experiences as well as social and cultural

realities of their students. The few who did mention that personal biases would inevitably be

present could not suggest ways in which they can be circumvented, except for being 'open' to

interact with people of different cultural backgrounds. Taylor (2010) suggested that through self-

reflection, student teachers will start to remove their biases and build trusting relationships with

their students that would achieve greater chances for student success.

In addition, with immigration providing a channel for the long term relocation of people,

cultural and language connectedness can become important factors that reshape the social fabric

of the host society (Massey, 2002). These challenging situations can be potentially divisive in terms of cultural practices and expectations amongst residents and new immigrants in Singapore. However, they do provide the opportunity for enriched learning within the school system. Thus, it has become increasingly important for Singapore to consider multicultural education in schools.

Recommendations

This study underscored the challenge for teacher education to take into consideration the complex identities that student teachers bring to their classrooms and raised important implications so that more critical understandings are formed about multiculturalism and effective multicultural practices. Banks (2008) and Goodwin (1994) asserted that teacher education must first of all help student teachers surface their own cultural assumptions which underlie their attitudes, paradigms, world views, values, beliefs, practices and biases and employ these assumptions to better comprehend the realities faced by their students. Firstly, Ramsey (1987) argued that multicultural education should be reflected in all stages of educational decisions and practices to challenge the aims and values that undergird curriculum designs, materials and activities. Student teachers need to view the importance of multicultural education to include marginalised perspectives and contentious public issues and thus position themselves as change agents for equality and social justice (Gay, 2005).

Secondly, multicultural education should be widespread and teacher education institutes should be places where opportunities are provided for student teachers to work, interact and build friendships with student teachers from other cultural backgrounds to acquire cultural competence which is the skill to function will in cross-cultural settings and to communicate collegially with people from different cultures (Pate, 2000). Cultural competency can only be

developed over time through a combination of cultural knowledge, direct intercultural interactions and reflection on those interactions (Chisholm, 1994). Neito (1996) stated that multicultural education should not simply be a course; rather, it should be a belief that is imbued pervasively in teacher education institutions.

Thirdly, student teachers need to be effective cross-cultural communicators, including nonverbal cues mediated by culture, by understanding how culture influences what and how to communicate, assumptions held by the listener and how much must be overly brought across, to create a classroom environment that promotes good interpersonal relationships (Bonvillain, 1993; Chisholm, 1994; Hall, 1989). Interpersonal skills require an understanding of the association between language and culture. Language promotes group and individual identity and is a function of culture as it reveals the norms and beliefs of the speakers.

Conclusion

Teachers who lack the understanding of multicultural education are not prepared for the reality of a pluralistic society and tend to have biases such as low expectations of the minority (Olstad, Foster & Wyman, 1983). Teacher education must prepare all student teachers to provide quality education for all. So, teacher education should (a) allow for cultural self-cognizance, (b) inculcate appreciation of diversity, (c) imbue cultural competency, and (d) prepare student teachers to communicate effectively with a variety of students and stakeholders. Multicultural education is integral in an effective and responsible teacher education programme, and not merely an added-on course as teaching is a multicultural experience (Chisholm, 1994).

This study surfaced student teachers' beliefs that the main goal of multicultural education was to assist students to learn to live together harmoniously by respecting one another. The 'human relations' approach favoured by the state dominated the student teachers' perceptions of

multicultural education (Sleeter & Grant, 2010). Having been socialised in the Singapore education system for a long period of time, it is not surprising that student teachers' perceptions reflected the state's stance of multicultural education as obtaining knowledge about different cultures to maintain 'racial harmony'. Though student teachers identified multicultural practices at an events and superficial level, when probed further, many felt that interactions among people of different cultures were important for students to experience and gain deep understanding of the differences in cultures. The lack of mention of critical and reflective multicultural practices reinforced the notion that student teachers do not see themselves as agents of change. Therefore, their utmost concern was to determine what and how they should teach in multicultural education instead. Future research could include the influence of teacher education on teachers' learning to teach processes in multicultural education, teacher knowledge issues, and the connection between teacher knowledge and multicultural practices.

8066 words (excluding cover page, figure, table, references and appendices)

References

Alviar-Martin, T., & Ho, L. (2011). "So, where do they fit in?" Teachers' perspectives of multi-cultural education and diversity in Singapore. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *27*, 127-135.

Avery, P., & Walker, C. (1993). Prospective teachers' perceptions of ethnic and gender differences in academic achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *44*(1), 27-37.

Banks, J. A. (2008). *An introduction to multicultural education* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Banks, J. A. (1995). Multicultural education: Historical development, dimensions, and practice. In J. A. Banks (Ed.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. xi-24). New York: Macmillan.

Banks, J. A. (Ed.) (2004). *Diversity and citizenship education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Banks, J. A. (2008). Diversity, group identity, and citizenship education in a global age. *Educational Researcher*, 37(3), 129-139.

Banks, J. A. (2009). *The Routledge international companion to multicultural education*. London & New York: Routledge.

Banks, J. A. (2010). Multicultural education: Characteristics and goals. In J. A. Banks, & C. M. Banks (Eds.). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (7th ed.). New York: Wiley.

Berthelsen, D., & Karuppiah, N. (2011). Multicultural education: The understandings of preschool teachers in Singapore. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, *36*(4), 38-42.

Bokhorst-Heng, Wendy (2007). Multiculturalism's narratives in Singapore and Canada: Exploring a model for comparative multiculturalism and multicultural education. *Journal*

of Curriculum Studies, *39* (6), 629-658.

Bonvillain, N. (1993). *Language, culture and communication: The meaning of messages*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Borg, W. R. & Gall, M. D. (1989). *Educational research: An introduction*. New York: Pitman.

Chisholm, I. M. (1994). Preparing teachers for multicultural classrooms. *Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students*, *14*, 43-68.

Chong, S. N. Y., & Cheah, H. M. (2010). Demographic trends: Impact on Schools. *New Horizons in Education, 58*(1), 1-15.

Clark, C. M., & Peterson, P. L. (1986). Teachers' thought processes. In Wittrock, M. C. (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (3rd ed.). (pp. 255-296). New York: Macmillan.

Cochran-Smith, M. (1991). Learning to teach against the grain. *Harvard Educational Review*, *61*(3), 279-310.

Cohen, R. A. (1969). Conceptual styles, culture conflict and non-verbal tests of intelligence. *American Anthropologist*, *71*, 828-856.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*, (4th ed.), Boston, MA: Pearson Education Inc.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. (2002). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, *39*(3), 124-130.

Croninger, B. (1991). The social context of schooling: What research and theory can tell us. *Intercultural Development Research Association Newsletter*, *18*(5), 10-14.

Dhindsa, H. S. (2005). Cultural learning environment of upper secondary science students. *International Journal of Science Education, 27*(5), 575-592.

Dilworth, M. E., & American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (1992). *Diversity*

in teacher education: New expectations (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Buchmann, M. (1985). Pitfalls of experience in teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, *87*(1), 53-66.

Forss, P. (2007, 28 August). Queues form at Tanjong Katong Primary ahead of registration. *The Straits Times*. Singapore.

Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York: Seaburg.

Gay, G. (2005). Politics of multicultural teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *56*(3), 221-228.

Gollnick, D. M. (1995). National and state initiatives for multicultural education. In J. Banks (Ed.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 44-64). New York: MacMillan.

Gollnick, D. M., & Chinn, P. C. (2009). *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Goodwin, A. L. (1990). *Fostering diversity in the teaching profession through multicultural field experiences*. Tamps, FL: ACCTE.

Goodwin, A. L. (1994). Making the transition from self to other: Who do preservice teachers really think about multicultural education?, *Journal of Teacher Education*, 45(2), 119-131.

Gracia, R. L. (1984). Countering classroom discrimination. *Teaching into Practice*, *xxiii*(2), 104-109.

Grant, C. A., & Secada, W. G. (1990). Preparing teachers for diversity. In W. R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (pp. 403-422). New York: Macmillan.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Gurung, R. A. R., & Prieto, L. R. (2009). *Getting culture: Incorporating diversity across the*

curriculum. Steerling, VA: Stylus.

Haberman, M. (1987). *Recruiting and selecting teachers for urban schools*. New York, NY and
Reston, VA): Eric Clearinghouse on Urban Education Institute for Urban and Minority
Education

Haberman, M. (1991). Can cultural awareness be taught in teacher education programs?.
Teaching Education, *4*(1), 25-31.

Hall, E. T. (1989). Unstated features of cultural context of learning. *The Educational Forum*,
54(1), 21-24.

Hill, M. & Lian, F. K. (1995). *The politics of nation building and citizenship in Singapore.* New
York: Routledge Publishers.

Howard, T. C. (2003). Culturally relevant pedagogy: Ingrdients for critical teacher reflection.
Theory Into Practice, 42(3), 195-202.

Howell, M. H. (1997). *Multicultural teacher preparation: Experiences that affect the perceptions
and behaviours of teachers in their ability to embrace diversity*, unpublished doctoral
dissertation, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Ismail, R. (2007). Muslims in Singapore as a case study for understanding inclusion/ exclusion
phenomenon. In *Fullbright Symposium: Muslim Citizens in the West: Promoting Social
Inclusion*. Perth, Western Australia: UWA Centre for Muslim States and Societies.

Johnson D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2002). *Multicultural education and human relations: Valuing
diversity*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Khoo, A., & Lim, K. M. (2004). Trainee teachers' stereotypes of ethnic groups in Singapore. In
Lai Ah Eng (Ed.), *Beyond rituals and riots*. (pp. 197-277). Singapore: Marshall Cavendish
International.

Ladson-billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1999). Preparing teachers for diversity: Historical perspectives, current trends, and future directions. In L. Darling-Hammond. & G. Skyes (Eds.), *Handbook of policy and practice* (pp. 86-124). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Lee, C., Cherian, M., Rahil I., Ng, M., Sim, J. and Chee, M. F. (2004). Children's experiences of multiracial relationships in informal primary school settings. In Lai Ah Eng (Ed.), *Beyond rituals and riots*. (pp. 70-86). Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International.

Massey, D. S. (2002). The new immigration and ethnicity in the United States. In N. A. Denton and S. E. Tolnay (Eds.), *American Diversity: A demographic challenge for the twenty-first century* (pp. 75-98). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Ministry of Education [MOE] (2010). MOE to enhance learning of 21st Century Competencies and strengthen art, music and physical education. Press release. Retrieved from http://www.moe.gov.sg/media/press/2010/03/moe-to-enhance-learning-of-21s.php.

National Institute of Education [NIE], (2009). *A teacher education model for the 21st century: A report by the National Institute of Education*. Singapore. Singapore: Author.

Neito, S. (1992). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. New York: Longman.

Neito, S. (1999). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Olmedo, I. M. (1997). Challenging old assumptions: Preparing teachers for inner city schools. *Journal of Teaching and Teacher Education, 13*(3), 245-258.

Olstad, R. G., Foster, C. D., & Wyman, R. M. (1983). Multicultural education for preservice teachers. *Integrated Education*, *21*, 137-139.

Opotow, S., Gerson,J., & Woodside, S. (2005). From moral exclusion to moral inclusion: Theory for teaching peace. *Theory into Practice***,** *44***(**4**),** 303–318.

Parsley, A. L. (2000). *A comparative analysis of multicultural education in Australia, Singapore and the United States*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 8005210600)

Pate, G. S. (2000). Research on prejudice reduction. In J. Noel (Ed.). *Notable selection in multicultural education* (pp. 102-108). Guilford, CT: Dushkin/ McGraw Hill.

Ramsey, P. (1987). *Teaching and learning in a diverse world*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Rios, F. (1993). Thinking in urban multicultural classrooms: Four teachers perspectives. *Urban Education*. *28*(3), 245-266.

Ross, D., & Smith, W. (1992). Understanding preservice teachers' perspectives on diversity. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *43*(2), 94-103.

Rogus, J. F. (1987). The preparation of teachers for urban schools: Creating a crisis. *Metropolitan Education*, *4*, 30-40.

Singh, B. R. (1988). Cognitive styles, cultural pluralism and effective teaching and learning. *International Review of Education*, *34*(3), 355-370.

Sleeter, C. E., & Grant, C. A. (1987). An analysis of multicultural education in the United States. *Harvard Educational Review*, *57*, 421-444.

Sleeter, C. E., & Grant, C. A. (2007). *Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class and gender* (5th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & sons.

Sleeter, C. E., & Grant, C. A. (2010). Race, class, gender, and disability in the classroom. In J. A. Banks, & C. M. Banks (Eds.). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (7th ed.). New York: Wiley.

Stanat, P., & Christensen, G. (2006). *Where immigrant students succeed: A comparative review of performance and engagement in PISA 2003.* Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Tatum, B. D. (1992). Talking about race, learning about racism: The application of racial identity development theory in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review*, *62*(1), 1-24.

Vogt, L., Jordan, C., & Tharp, R. (1987). Explaining school failure, producing school success: Two cases. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, *18*(4), 276-286.

Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*, (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Zeichner, K., & Hoeft, K. (1995). Teacher socialization for cultural diversity. In J. Banks (Ed.). *Handbook for Research on Multicultural Education* (pp. 525-527). New York: Macmillan.