

Incorporating Japanese studies into the curriculum of an American university's multicultural education course

Banks (2014) conceptualized that the constituents of effective multicultural education should include intellectual sophistication, emotional empowerment, and a concrete action plan for learners. Pre-service teachers' emotional empowerment involved with educational objectives of affective taxonomy, where the taxonomy refers to the science of description, identification, naming, and classification (Krathwohl, et al, 1964). Because affective educational objectives are very different from those of cognitive educational objectives (Krathwohl, et al, 1964), there have been attempts to re-conceptualize the process of instruction and assessment as an interactive dynamic of affective development (Ford, 2011; Popham, 2011). Those innovative approaches of instruction and assessment should contribute to the efficacy of multicultural education by providing direct hints to guide pre-service teachers' learning and by evaluating their educational progress. Such instruction and assessment should permit not only summative but also formative feedback as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Moreover, it would be ideal if such a learning approach allows students with the opportunities of self-regulation and autonomous choices. In order to actualize such pedagogical visions, I have required students to write extensive journals as a course requirement in my multicultural education course.

Journal writing is one of the most effective learning methods of affective educational goals (if not the most effective) where journal writers were guided and provided with stimulating journal topics, adequate resources, and illuminating inspiration for the character growth of the journal writers. Journal writing refers to the activities of reflections and consequent writings, where "the very production and acquisition of knowledge" is being constructed and contested by students' writing activities (Giroux, 1991, p. 512). Epistemologically, journal writing is a constructivist approach as Banks (2014) conceptualizes, "when teachers engage students in knowledge construction, the students are given opportunities to participate in building knowledge and to construct their own interpretations of historical, social, and current events" (p. 88). The enriching experiences during the past two weeks of 2014 Japanese Studies fellowship at the San Diego State University provided me with content, resources, and insights on how to incorporate Japanese Studies' curriculum into a coherent journal-writing topic of my multicultural education course. Followed is a constructed example of suggested journal topic.

Scholars of Japanese Studies identified comparative perspectives of westerners versus Japanese in their worldview as following. From the following excerpts, do you find yourself agreeing more than one or more of these findings than others? If so, read/view the provided further suggested resources about the finding and write your reflections into a journal entry.