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Implementing Tasks That Promote Reasoning and Problem-Solving in Education

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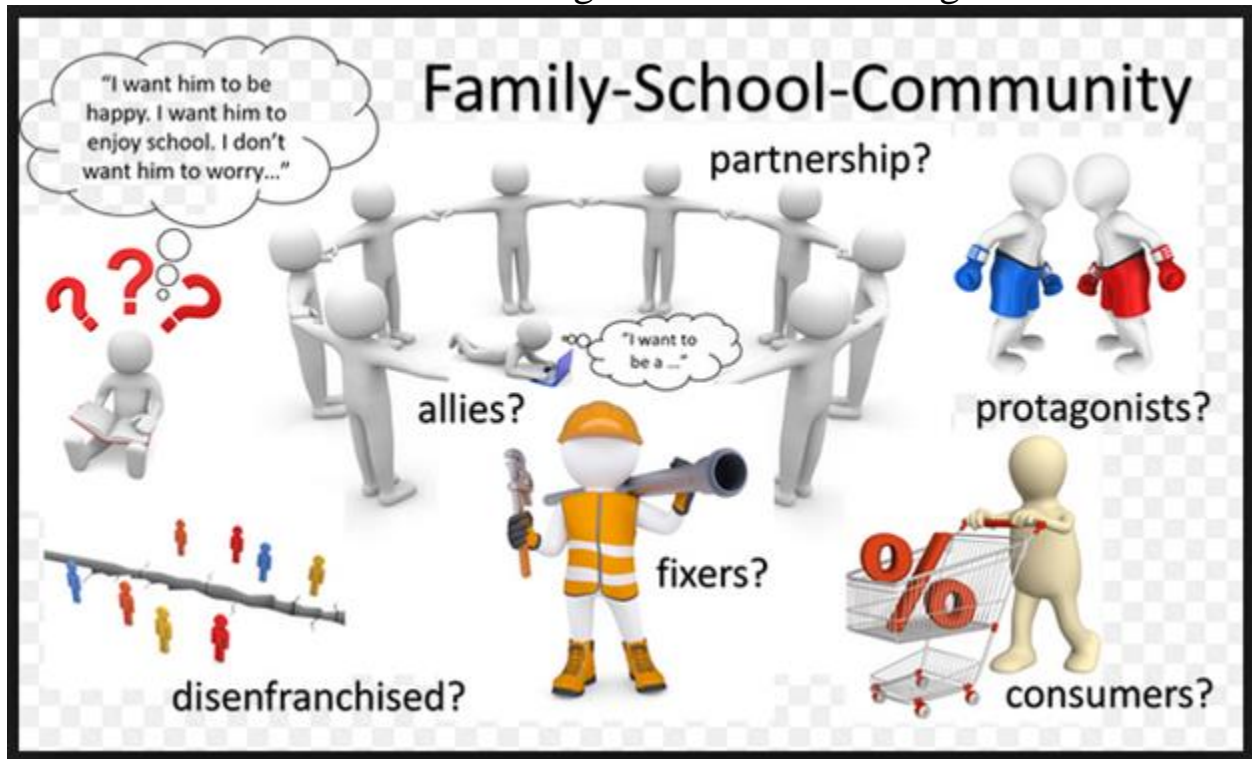
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Implementing Tasks That Promote Reasoning and Problem-Solving in Education

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Critical Thinking for Decision Making



by
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February 17, 2019

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Introduction

Learning takes place every day, which makes it one of the critical aspects of life. The achievements and things that people do in life is a product of the things they have learned throughout the life cycle. They are a collection of their experiences and the things they learn whether informally or otherwise. As such, it is critical to focus on the learning environment, the teaching models, and basically all elements involved in the learning process. Certainly, the process of learning influences the behavior, attitude, and perceptions of the learners. In this way, any attempts to raise individuals who depict a specific characteristic descend from the process by which they acquire the respective features. Results of effective learning are students who are responsible and diverse in their behavior. However, this is not achievable without the necessary strategies on the teaching process. On this note, effective learning is one that incorporates the facets of the learner, involves more than one party, and appreciates diversity among the learners.

Biographies of the Authors



Carl Adams. An educator, fitness instructor, and community builder who believes in enhancing critical thinking, management, and decision making when it comes to dealing with people in education and various organizations.



Henreta Jarrett. An Elementary Behavior Interventionist who provides teachers and students with positive alternatives to correct undesired behavior with proper technique and strategies. Responsible for teacher-to-teacher classroom support, modeling, mentoring and collaborating to promote better behavior management strategies for teachers and students.



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Chapter 1

School-Community Learning Partnerships



by:

Carl Adams

Understanding of School-community Learning Partnerships

As I found in Siversten (2015), learning is a multidimensional and continuous process that requires collaboration between various parties. For the past decade in the 21st century, various stakeholders in education have appreciated and emphasized the importance of this collaboration in improving the quality of education (Siversten, 2015). I agree that significant progress is evident in attempts to foster meaningful partnerships between education-related community programs and learning institutions. Notably, these partnerships are beneficial for learners, learning institutions, and the communities that are part of the partnerships (Little, n.d.). I was surprised that they are crucial to monitoring the where, how, what and when the students learn, this way everyone takes responsibility of the learning process and eventually plays a part in improving the quality of the learning process.

The Importance of Parental Involvement in Education

Deriving from my student's parents, they form an integral part of the learning process for their student. As the primary caregivers of the students, their behaviors and perceptions reflect in the lives of their children. In the same way, I agree that their participation in the learning process significantly affects the learning outcomes. Parental participation in the learning process strengthens the bond between them and their children. In this way, it makes it easy for the two to

communicate effectively and understand the needs and shortcomings of the student (Brief 4, 2019). As a result, parents who take part in the education process of their children are more confident about their parenting decision, especially regarding education. In addition, parental participation enhances strong connections between the student, the parents, the teachers and the school at large. Importantly, these connections increase the parents' confidence in the school systems and processes. In my finding, research indicates that schools that allow high parental engagement levels have better reputations and increased community support. Besides, parental participation is by itself a form of motivation to the student in their learning experiences.

I support that parental involvement in education is as critical to parents as it is to their children. Research indicates that more than two-thirds of teachers believe that participation in education has a positive correlation with the learners' performance (Siversten, 2015). I believe that children are more motivated and feel the urge to perform better when their parents are involved in the learning process. In addition, at young ages, children do not understand the role of education, and adult involvement instills a positive perception of education. Children model most of their behavior from adults, and education is no exception. I understand that when parents take part in their children's learning process, they motivate and praise their children, which makes them develop a positive attitude towards education and desire to perform even better (Preston, 2013). Finally, my inquiries resulted in the finding that parental participation in education helps the children deal with their fears about education and boosts their mental health and self-confidence. As a result, they develop appropriate social skills both with their peers and teachers, which are critical to effective learning.

Benefits of Community Involvement in Education

As I found, all parties involved in collaborative education stand to benefit. Partnerships between learning institutions and communities support to strengthen and transform the participants of the partnerships and eventually results in improved quality of the process. One of the immediate benefits of community partnerships is that they improve the learning outcomes. My research indicates that after-school programs that are more connected to the teachers and school management systems are more successful in enhancing positive behavior among students and homework completion. In support of my argument, these partnerships between schools and communities enhance service continuity during the times of the year that the students are away from school and make the school transitions easier. I agree that teachers and students are exposed to diverse approaches to learning through partnerships (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017). In the same way, students get more learning opportunities through extended learning programs. At times, parents and other family members have limited chances to take part in the learning process at school. This is made easy for me to understand community partnerships, as they can conveniently be part of the learning process.

Schools that allow community partnerships, in my observation, directly benefit from the associations. The associations supplement the school curriculum by adding into it other elements that are unavailable or insufficient in the normal in the regular school days. Specifically, they enrich the curriculum through a range of artistic activities that they provide to the students. I understand that they enforce the concepts taught in school without necessarily replicating the same school systems. This is mainly achieved through organized after-school programs and summer school. Collaborations between schools and communities also promote the learning culture in students outside the class settings (Van Roekel, 2008). I agree that this is achieved through a range of programs by the community that allows the students to showcase the skills

achieved in school and even acquire new ones. As a result, children who may not be good performers in classwork are motivated and engaged in the outdoor activities in which they perform better. My evaluation indicated that these school-community programs are vital to improving the learning outcomes and raising all-rounded students.

My Findings on Ways to Enhance Parental and Community Involvement in Education

Owing to the numerous benefits, I identified in community involvement in education, it is critical to define ways in which school can establish and cultivate these relationships. Certainly, I believe it is impossible to ignore the influence of technology and social media on various aspects of life. One of the convenient ways to reach out to people is through social media. A school that is interested in community engagement should have a social media page or handle in some of the popular social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Siversten, 2015). My findings have demonstrated that it becomes easy to reach out to a large number of people at the same time. This provided an effective platform to have a back and forth conversation with the community members and for them to present their concerns and recommendations. In my experience, social media interaction should only complement but not replace real-life engagements with the community.

I would encourage that taking part in non-educational events in the community is key to establishing lasting relationships with the community members and eventually their participation in education programs. I support the argument by Đurišić & Bunijevac (2017) that participating in non-school events communicates to the community members that one is indeed a part of the community and that they appreciate the community activities. It also creates opportunities for us to take part in informal conversations with community members. Some of these events include sporting activities, civic meetings, and art exhibitions. Other activities I would use to encourage

community participation in education include organizing and inviting them to school activities and engaging with civic groups such as scouting organizations and business clubs.

Conclusion

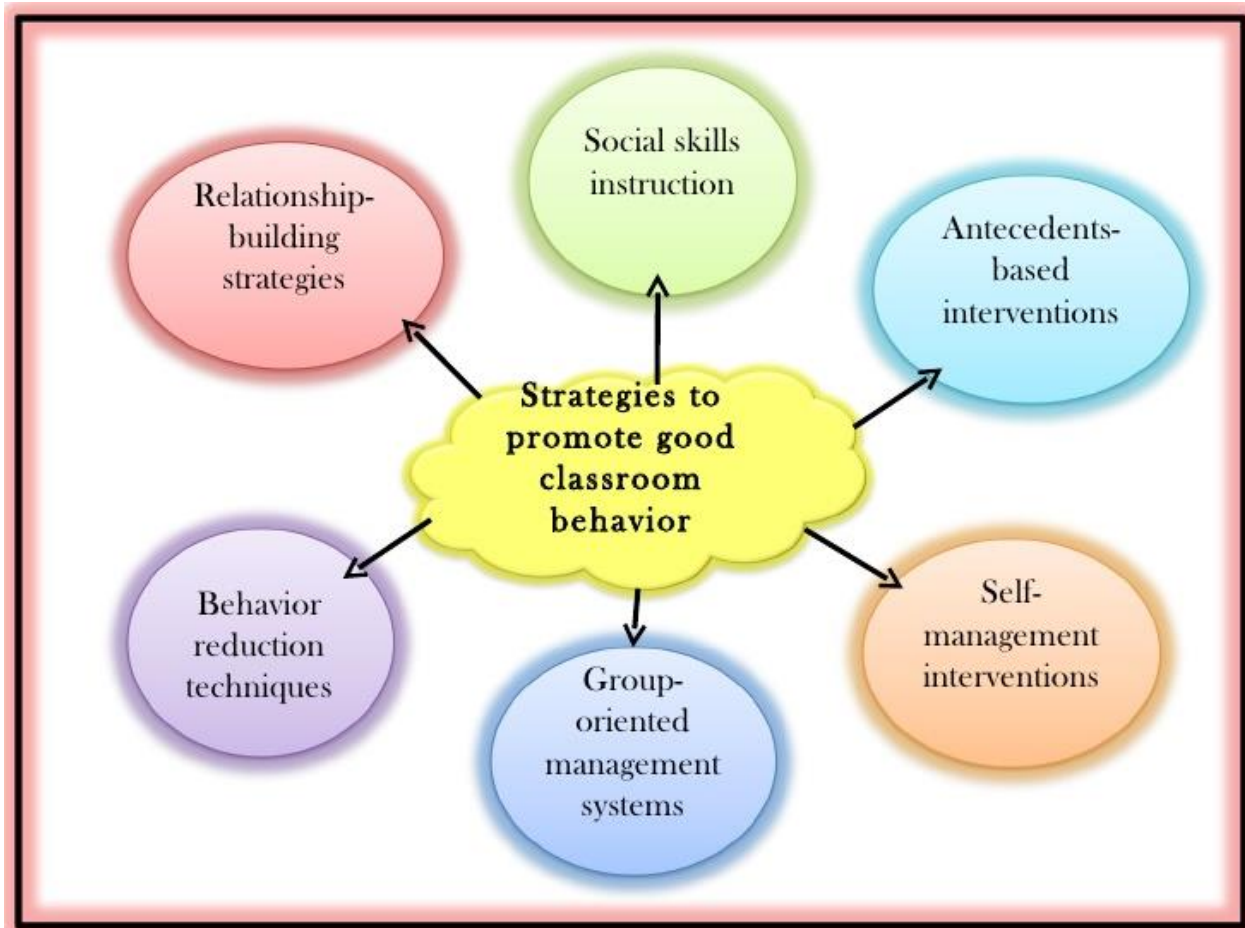
Summing up, I agree that community involvement in education is one of the most effective ways of improving the learning outcomes of students. Whether it involves the parents or the entire community, I agree it is a motivation to the students and emphasizes the importance of learning, which they may not understand at a tender age. For any learning institution that looks forward to improving the quality of their learning and raising all rounded students, I suppose they consider community participation in their priority list. This can be done through social media by creating platforms in which the community members can discuss their views and air their grievances regarding the school systems. Whichever method that one chooses to engage the community in education, the benefits are worth the effort.

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Chapter 2

The Role of Class Management Skills in Teaching



by:

Henreta Jarrett

The Role of Class Management Skills in Teaching

We all know that teachers require skills and techniques to enhance the learning process and make sure the students remain organized, attentive, and highly productive in the classroom. In my opinion, the proper application of classroom management skills is key to minimizing and eliminating student behaviors that have negative impacts on learning. In addition, the ability of a teacher to apply the classroom management strategies is a fundamental parameter in assessing their effectiveness in teaching. I agree that the classroom management strategies are beyond the compliance regulations imposed on students to improve their attention, following direction, and listening. From my evaluation, teachers must do more to improve the learning process, including behavior management, and learning expectations. While the class management skills appear superficially simple and easily applicable, I found that effective application and integration into a classroom setting called for a combination of skills and experience from the teacher.

In my assessment, classroom management is essential for student success. I learned that the regulations and expectations, and rules involved in classroom management foster a productive learning atmosphere. A disorganized classroom with no clear routines and regulations make it difficult to achieve optimal learning outcomes. In addition, when students have no idea of what to do, it is easy for them to lose focus and turn to something outside the learning scope. In the same way, a teacher who is frequently distracted to solve behavior issues has little time to focus on the learning objectives (Lopes et al., 2017). On the contrary, when rules are clear, and routines are defined, learning is made easy, and my research depicts that all the parties' involved fulfill their expectations. These routings includes students being aware of the regulations of group discussions or even the things to do when the teacher is away from class. This prevents cases of creating new regulations every time there is a class activity.

My observation in the classroom has led me to believe that proper class management skills save time, increase consistency, and reduce behavioral problems. Practical use of time is enhanced when students know what they should do all the time. In my assessment, a lot of time spent giving directions is saved. In the same way, a teacher with excellent management skills allows for consistency among the students. As such, every time the teacher is away from the class they can comfortably take control since they already have an established routine they follow. When there are no management skills, on the other hand, I found out that students spend all the time wavering from activity to the other things outside of the class work when the teacher is away (Guyana, n.d.). Finally, a well-managed classroom leaves no room for the students to misbehave. There is little time for idling, and they have no option but to follow the regulations. Also, the teacher focuses on important things other than maintaining discipline in the classroom. With all these benefits, teachers should focus on improving their class management skills to support productive learning.

Classroom Management towards Enhanced Academics

There are several techniques that teachers can use to promote learning in the classroom. Students appreciate and follow guidelines when they are part of the implementation process. Teachers should take advantage of this fact and instead of just spelling out rules to the students, they should make them take part in coming up with ideas to set classroom expectations in the beginning of every new school year and the expectations can be revisited midway through the school year. This way, it will be easy for them to follow the rules that they created, which will eventually foster effective learning (Kratochwi et al., n.d.). In my research, effective learning can be fueled by encouraging initiative. The teacher should allow students to express their knowledge in a certain topic by giving them opportunities to speak about the topic to the rest of

the class (Lopes et al., 2017). This can be done before or after the teacher has discussed the topic with the class, as a way of motivating the students to read ahead and explore beyond what is given by the teacher. I believe it should be combined with praise for the students who make the best presentations to entice other students to do the same.

Analysis of Classroom Management to Prevent Bullying

From my experience, bullying is one of the issues that teachers have to deal with in their daily interactions with students. Sometimes it can be very intense such that it affects learning among the students. For this reason, I found that teachers need appropriate management skills to deal with the issue. It is not easy for the bullied victims to come forward and report their experiences since they are ashamed and intimidated by the bullies. I support Allen, 2010's proposition that it is not easy to identify them unless a teacher is extra keen in their work, this can be achieved through constant communication with the students to understand what they may be going through. In addition, the teacher should watch for signs of bullying in victims such as fear, dissociation, disinterest in activities, failing grades, and aggression (Allen, 2010). My research agrees that teachers should freely discuss bullying with their students and advise the students on what to do in case of bullying.

Classroom Management Analysis in Preventing Negative Behavior

In my experience, dealing with negative behavior is one of the daily activities. In this way, teachers require the necessary skills to manage and prevent the recurrence of negative behavior among students. One of the most effective strategies is to make sure that, as a teacher one understands the negative behavior by the students (Rosenfeld, 2014). Sometimes students exhibit negative behavior as a result of other underlying factors in their lives such as troubled families or being bullied in school. As I found from Rosenfeld (2014), understanding such

students from these perspectives forms the basis for solving their negative behavior. Secondly, I obtained information that in the classroom, teachers should try as much as possible to avoid group punishments. Punishing the entire group for wrongdoings by a few students deters the perpetrators from taking responsibility for their behavior and increases the chances of a repeat in the future (Lees, n.d.). Also, group punishments demotivate the well-behaved students when they are punished together with the ones in the wrong. In my understanding, other skills that improve the management of students with negative behavior include communication with the students and their caregivers, rewards for positive behavior and modeling the behavior that teachers expect in their students.

Conclusion

In my deductions, classroom management is the most important skill a teacher can possess besides teaching. The skills ensure that the teachers and the students can maximize the time available for learning. Besides, it is key to ensuring that students have a good relationship among themselves and with their teachers. I found out that having definite regulations and routines, for instance, make it easy for the teacher and the students to work together since they both understand their responsibilities. Other skills I found that are key to effective teaching include effective communication at personal levels. Teachers, parents, and caregivers should all work together to make class management convenient for all parties.

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Chapter Three

The Role of Diversity within K-12 Education



by:

Vivian Yakpo Newton

The Role of Diversity within K-12 Education

From my research, prejudice, discrimination, and stereotypes are some of the recurrent challenges in the 21st century. This is a result of a society in which opportunities are availed or denied based on characteristics such as gender, race, socio-economic class, and culture. I also discovered that appreciating the role of diversity in education is one of the effective strategies of reducing prejudice and discrimination based on any ground. This is particularly important for a country such as the United States that hosts people from numerous cultures, races, and backgrounds. In my observation, when the need for diversity is instilled in students through the education systems, it becomes an effective way to pass the same onto future generations. In the face of globalization and the ever-changing world, diversity is one of the essential concepts that should be incorporated in the K- 12 education system to bring up students who understand the need of appreciating personal differences and eliminating discrimination at all cost.

Deriving from my findings, schools in the United States are quickly transforming into more diverse institutions in numerous ways. This brings in the need for leaders and other stakeholders in the educational system to appreciate diversity, equity, and inclusion in designing the curriculum, hiring diverse teachers to determine the learning environment for the students. In my findings, appreciating diversity ensures that the learning process takes care of the needs of all students. Also, teachers who understand and incorporate diversity communicate with their colleagues, students, and parents in culturally sensitive and inclusive ways (Vanderbilt University, n.d.). In this sense, they go beyond the legal requirements of diversity and ensure that students with learning challenges meet their learning outcomes as well as their counterparts. In my assessment, this creates a sense of appreciation and helps bridge the gap between disadvantaged students and their colleagues.

Appreciating diversity in K-12 education also makes it possible for students to integrate what they learn with what they already know. When students begin the learning process, they do so with a collection of previous knowledge and from which they hope to build new information (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Indeed, some of these previous frameworks are based on cultural settings and experiences that differ among students. My assessment and research prove that when students are unable to connect new information with what they already know, the new information can easily be lost, or students can feel frustrated about the learning process (American Psychological Association). I believe that it is the role of the teachers to bring in what the students know as the basis for introducing new concepts. I am also certain of the proposition by Arkoudis et al. (2010) that diversity serves to create a safe learning environment in which all students can relate and ingest what they learn. In addition, teachers have a responsibility to structure their teaching plans to accommodate the learning needs of all students. In my analysis, this makes it easy for all students to appreciate and perceive themselves as equal with their schoolmates. Furthermore, this approach helps build bridges between the school culture and the background of students.

Helping Students to Appreciate Gender Diversities in School

My understanding is that students must learn the importance of diversity and the need to recognize personal differences right from the time they begin to attend school. In K-12 education, there are a few strategies that teachers must use to reinforce gender diversity in school settings (American Psychological Association, n.d.). Some of the strategies I found, are as easy as changing the perceptions of the students regarding gender differences. Whenever possible, teachers must address the class as “students” to avoid gender sensitive terms such as boys or girls. This deviates the students from their gender disparities and makes them focus on other

aspects of their relationships. Deriving from my assessment, this should be combined with the objectivity of the teachers in expressing issues in the classroom (North Central University, 2019). Their answers should be more gender neutral and not based on gender differences among the students. I believe that teachers should discuss the issues with their students and solve any inconsistencies in the way they handle gender diversity.

Helping Students to Appreciate Cultural Diversities

Following my findings on globalization, people are constantly traveling across the world for education, business, health tourism, adventure, or other reasons. In this way, it is normal to have a classroom that constitutes students from varying cultural backgrounds. As such, teachers have a role to ensure all the students in these diverse classes meet their learning needs without feeling excluded at any point. I agree that the teacher should express their interest in understanding the cultural background of the students and allow students to do the same with the objective of creating trust and cultivating relationships among themselves. I support that the learning systems should have inclusive curriculums that are sensitive about cultural differences of the students. In my understanding, teachers must teach students to synthesize and appreciate cultural differences as a way of preparing them for the diverse world. Language concerns should also must be incorporated in the K-12 education and learning materials can be provided depending on the level of English proficiency (American Psychological Association, n.d). From my experience, students from other cultural backgrounds usually feel appreciated and do easily catch up with their counterparts if included.

Assisting Students to Appreciate Economic Disparities

In my understanding, economic deprivation is one of the factors that hinder students from attaining their full potential in school. A student who can barely afford the basics of life is less

likely to perform well as compared to their advantaged colleagues. My evaluation demonstrates that the situation is complicated by factors in the school environment that show prejudice to such students and makes it even harder for them to concentrate (American Psychological Association, n.d.). There are measures that should be affected to facilitate a conducive learning experience by all the school faculties. Firstly, teachers should try their best to understand their students outside the classroom setting. I support North Central University (2019) that they should cultivate a personal relationship with their students and in this way understand their needs. At this point, they can connect the needy students with school counselor and other local programs for the economically deprived. Such help is critical to ensuring that such students' education is not cut short because of poverty. In the same way, I believe schools should have in place special programs to assist needy students who cannot afford commodities such as food, clothing and learning materials. My findings also showed that the program could be affected by incorporating other students who may be willing to help.

Conclusion

My assessment demonstrated that prejudice and discrimination have been a challenge in the 21st century. Individuals and organizations discriminate against people based on various aspects including race, gender, culture, and socio-economic class. The K-12 education system is characterized by students from different genders, economic class, and cultural backgrounds, this creates the need for teachers and other stakeholders in education to establish strategies of ensuring all students are included in the learning process and that all students achieve their full potential. In my understanding, this is beyond the classroom setting, but it is also paramount to raising generations that appreciate diversity. Teachers can do this by making use of neutral language wherever possible to cater to the diversities of their students. In the same way, they

should encourage the students to interact and understand the backgrounds of one another as a way to instill and appreciate the role of diversity in learning. Therefore, I found out that appreciating diversity is key to discovering different perspectives of the world while disregarding any perceived superiority of any of the perspectives.

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Conclusion

Learning is a constant process that involves lots of activities that includes the participation of various stakeholders, all who play a critical role in improving the quality of the process. One of the best approaches to education that enhance effectiveness is parental and community participation. Since schools are incapable of achieving all the learning outcomes in the few hours they have with the students, parents and the community must take up the role and helps in creating all-rounded students. This is achieved by providing opportunities for students to engage in activities that are insufficiently provided in school settings. Also, it gives students the motivation they need to excel and go through the challenges of life. During the teaching process, teachers have to incorporate teaching methods that train the students to fit in any setting of the diverse world by showing them the need to appreciate differences amongst themselves. All parties involved in the learning process should do all it takes to improve the quality of the learning process through a holistic approach to education.