

Multicultural Curriculum

Supplementary Material – Justification form

Program Overview

The Multicultural Curriculum Department is responding to a mandate outlined by both the Unitary Status Plan and the Strategic Plan to develop and implement a K-12 curriculum that is multicultural. A component of such an implementation plan is literature. There is currently a dearth of multicultural literature in TUSD classrooms and libraries. Further, the average publication date of these books, district-wide, ranges between 1997 and 2000. Access to contemporary multicultural literature allows for the kind of inquiry-based teaching that refines and extends students' skills in reading comprehension, critical thinking, and oral and written communication.

USP Language—The District shall continue to develop and implement a multicultural curriculum for District courses, which integrates racially and ethnically diverse perspectives and experiences. The multicultural curriculum shall provide students with a range of opportunities to conduct research and improve critical thinking and learning skills, create a positive and inclusive climate in classes and schools that builds respect and understanding among students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and promote and develop a sense of civic responsibility among all students. All courses shall be developed using the District's curricular review process and shall meet District and state standards for academic rigor. The courses shall be offered commencing in the 2013-2014 school year." [V.E.6.a.i]

Strategic Priority #1: Curriculum – TUSD will design an aligned, articulated and well administered curriculum that supports academically high standards of learning for all children, integrates college and career ready skills, incorporates fine and performing arts, and is culturally relevant for our diverse student population. It will be reviewed and revisited regularly to meet the changing demands of our students and community.

Strategic Priority #2: Instruction – TUSD will ensure that teachers deliver challenging and engaging instruction that is driven by a high quality curriculum and based on meeting the individual needs of every child.

Strategic Priority #1: Reflective Curriculum – TUSD will have classroom curricula, instruction, and professional development that integrate diversity and high expectations for all students

Program of Study

The Director of Multicultural Curriculum along with one .5 Multicultural Curriculum Integration Coordinator and four classroom teachers are in the process of developing a model for multicultural curriculum integration, which is student-centered and introduces students to complex ideas and diverse, rigorous texts. Our model uses well-crafted, multicultural books that are rich in ideas and invite a number of interpretations. Through consistent use of this literature, we have found that students develop their reading and critical thinking skills as well as their intercultural competency by asking questions, formulating and sharing their opinions, and supporting their ideas with evidence from the books they read. This justification form outlines the benefits of purchasing additional extended and supplemental multicultural texts for SY 2015-2016. It outlines why such texts are necessary for the continued development and implementation of a K-12 curriculum that is multicultural.

Assessment and Instruction

1. Multicultural literature is proven to be an effective support to classroom instruction with diverse learners. Literature provides a seamless connection to the curriculum. Additionally, with the support of Dr. Kathy Short, the multicultural curriculum team is developing an inquiry model of questioning and discussion that increases students critical thinking and learning skills and promotes a positive and inclusive classroom environment.
2. Several authors (Short, 2009; Sleeter, 2005; Banks, 1993; and Ognibene, 1989) have created frameworks that outline ways to transform the curriculum in both content and instructional practice in order to address the needs of students who have been historically marginalized or underrepresented. Based on these models, the Director of Multicultural Curriculum, along with the Multicultural Curriculum team, has developed a Multicultural Curriculum Planning Framework (MCPF) for integrating diverse perspectives into TUSD's broader curriculum. A significant part of this plan relies upon the use of contemporary, diverse texts.
3. Currently, teachers in TUSD have difficulty accessing and selecting quality multicultural books and engaging students from non-mainstream backgrounds. The current maps and units do not sufficiently support teachers in their efforts to engage students in critical discussions without focusing on cultural differences and exoticism. Additionally, these maps and units, which are additive in their approach to multicultural literature, contribute to maintaining negative cultural stereotypes and over-simplifying the teaching of multicultural literature. Contemporary literature from diverse perspectives will allow for a thorough revision of these maps and unit lesson plans.

Community Support

The infusion of diverse perspectives through literature is proven to have a positive impact on the parents/students/community (Boles, 2006 and De Leon, 2002). Multicultural literature supports the provision of a diverse, rigorous reading/language arts program. Students and adults are then able to engage in rich literary texts and shared inquiry discussions.

The Director of Multicultural Curriculum will also collaborate with the Student Equity Directors to communicate the benefits of using multicultural literature to parents/students/community through the African American Advisory, regional parent meetings, and parent information session organized by the Division of Student Equity.

Form filled out by: Desiree W. Cueto
December 18, 2014