

The Effect of Implementing Culturally Relevant and Anti-Bias Activities with Young Children  
in a Preschool Classroom

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**Abstract**

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The effects of a culturally relevant, anti-bias curriculum on a child's awareness of his or her classroom peers were studied in preschool aged children of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. Eighteen students (7 Black, 5 White, 5 Mixed-race, and 1 Latino) enrolled in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) classroom participated in this study. The culturally relevant, anti-bias unit titled, "Classroom Community" included a variety of activities involving books, music, art, and discussions conducted in both small and large group settings. Overall, goals of the unit were to increase each student's ability to understand, appreciate, and respect differences and similarities in their classroom, as well as build a safe and supportive classroom community where students can learn together and value the range of diversity. Students were assessed by two methods: the Draw-A-Person test and semi structured

interviews. It was hypothesized that culturally relevant and anti-bias education would enhance a child's ability to portray the members in their classroom community. After four weeks of the "Classroom Community" unit, students increased the number of human figures depicted in their drawings from a mean of 5.21 human figures per drawing to 7.29 human figures per drawing. In addition, semi structured interviews were conducted to address the following: are students aware of the differences and similarities of their classmates, what are their perceptions of skin color, and is it feasible for educators to implement culturally relevant, anti-bias lessons and activities to preschool aged students.

## Introduction

The U.S. population includes a collection of individuals who represent different cultural, ethnic, and racial groups. MacNaughton and Hughes (2007) defined cultural diversity as, “the differences in language, customs, beliefs, meaning and values between people from different ethnic backgrounds that is expressed in their daily lives” (p. 190). Classroom environments are becoming more diverse, allowing children the opportunity to increase their awareness of the similarities and differences that exist between one another. As children grow through their experiences at home and school, it is crucial that parents and educators encourage children to be culturally aware and sensitive to the diverse populations that exist in society. Family, peer interactions, and school environments have an impact on a child’s ability to understand similarities and differences. It is imperative that adults working with young children acknowledge these differences in a positive, accepting way while teaching appropriate responses to children’s inquiries or discomfort regarding differences (Derman–Sparks & the ABC Task Force, 1989). Teachers must encourage positive ideas and understandings of diversity, by creating learning opportunities that acknowledge, value, and appreciate differences that exist between students. Specifically, interventions must encourage preschool aged children to be more aware and sensitive to issues of diversity, teach young children to respect others’ cultures and values, and allow children to recognize the value of how people of diverse cultures work together as a community (Kendall, 1983). In essence, educating students about racial awareness, identification, and acceptance are important for individuals growing in a multicultural world.

The effect of multicultural education in a preschool setting can produce lasting effects in a child’s learning and development, and “when done effectively, overt discussion about racial and ethnic difference can have a positive influence on children’s racial and ethnic attitude”

(Bernstein, Zimmerman, Werner-Wilson, & Vosburg, 2000, p. 184). Implementing culturally relevant and anti-bias activities in a preschool classroom is the first step towards working with diverse children and their families in an early childhood setting. According to York (2003), a child's home culture must match caregiving routines, teaching strategies, and curriculum in order to be culturally relevant. Cultural contexts in which children experiences in their homes, communities, and with their families may differ from the cultural practices prevailing in their school setting. Culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse children are faced with the challenge of performing cultural practices and values that differ from their own. Therefore, early childhood education programs and teachers must implement teaching strategies that support children who experience this cultural conflict. Secondly, anti-bias involves teaching children to be respectful, appreciative, and positive when interacting with people who are different from them (York, 2003). Educators have the ability to create optimal learning environments for students through visual displays, activities, celebrations, unit themes, and through their interactions with children and staff. It is essential that educators work to increase a student's self and group identity through activities that appreciate and respect the differences and similarities among one another.

### **Review of Literature**

Extensive research has been conducted regarding the variety of techniques used to measure the racial attitudes and preferences of young children. Byrd (2012) critically analyzed existing approaches, and identified the doll study paradigm, paper and pencil measurements, and projective/qualitative techniques to capture the perspectives of children. In her review, she discovered that "researchers should employ more developmental theories in developing measures that can better capture the unique nature of ethnic minority children's racial attitudes, how they

form, and implications for adjustment” (Byrd, 2012, p.4). Further, Byrd indentified three components of racial/ethnic identity that are relevant for children: awareness, identification, and attitudes (Byrd, 2012). “Awareness or classification refers to the ability to distinguish between members of different races according to commonly accepted norms” (Byrd, p. 4, 2012). Ramsey and Myers (1990) state that though race and ethnicity are socially constructed categories with phenotypical markers in addition to cultural and social markers, most studies conceptualize awareness as the ability to distinguish based on distinct physical features, predominantly skin color, as these are the features most salient to children (cited in Byrd, 2012, p.4). The ability to correctly name one’s own race/ethnicity is termed self-identification (Byrd, 2012). Lastly, Byrd describes that a person’s beliefs about the characteristics of different racial groups is referred to as attitudes (Byrd, 2012).

K.B. Clark and Clark’s (1939) the “doll study” technique became highly popularized between 1939 and 1977 (as cited by Byrd, 2012, p.8). “The standard paradigm requires that children identify their preference for one of two or more figures, one representing the child’s own race and the others representing an out-group, usually Whites” (Byrd, 2012, p.8). Questions were designed to measure racial preference, awareness, and self-identification. Studies have been conducted with primarily preschool aged children, since verbal selections or reading ability is not required. The doll study paradigm has been criticized by a number of researchers. Cross (1985) states that one way that the doll studies have been criticized is that examiners assume a link between racial preference and self-esteem (cited in Byrd, 2012, p. 13). Byrd (2011) also points out that, “children are asked to decide whether they prefer their own race to another race, not the degree to which they feel positively or negatively about their own race” (p.14). Overall, it has

been found that the doll paradigm measures in-group/out-group preference, but lacks in measuring a child's racial identity (Bank, 1976).

Racial attitudes have also been measured through the use of paper-and-pencil measures requiring children to respond to sets of written items (Byrd, 2011). Perkins and Mebert (2005) investigated the "racial expertise" in 79 preschool children. Participants were separated into three groups; children in preschools with multicultural and emergent curricula, children in preschools with multicultural but no emergent curricula, and children in preschools with neither multicultural nor emergent curricula. Responses to the Multi-Response Racial Attitude Scale and domain specific measure of racial groups knowledge suggest that children in preschools with both multicultural and emergent curricula have more domain-specific racial knowledge (Perkins & Mebert, 2005). Byrd (2012) also identified the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), Racial Identity Attitudes Scale/Cross Racial Identity Scale (RIAS/CRIS), and Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) as pencil-and-paper measure. The benefits of this approach are that it can be conducted over larger groups, and it can measure multiple dimensions of identity unlike the doll study paradigm. Unfortunately, paper-and-pencil measures are challenging to administer to preschool aged children due to the requirement to read as well as understand abstract concepts that may be involved (Byrd, 2012).

Projective and qualitative measures have been used that do not require children to respond to questions about their racial group directly, nor do they involve terms that may seem abstract to young children (Byrd, 2012). Projective measures include Draw-a-Person test, semi structured interviews, and observations. In the past, Draw-A-Person test has been used for gender identification, yet examining racial identification has only been examined by a few studies. Schofield (1978) first studied the use of the Draw-A-Person test as a tool to identify one's

acceptance of racial identity. He states that, “The Draw-A-Person is most probably much less reactive and threatening than these [doll test or picture test] since the issue of race is not as obviously under investigation” (Schofield, 1978, p. 313). Rather, he describes that the “...evidence of racial group membership on the drawings is evidence of an acceptance of racial identity” (Schofield, 1978, p. 313). On the other hand, Schofield (1978) states that a significant disadvantage of this method for analysis is that the individual’s ability to draw becomes a factor. Drawing skills that resemble a person’s race through color, facial features, and hairstyles are based on the ability of the participant to portray to its audience the intended racial identity (Schofield, 1978). His study aimed to measure the reliability and validity of the Draw-A-Person Test as an indicator of racial identity in 157 black and 167 white first and second grade children. Participants received a standard set of crayons (yellow, orange, red, blue, peach, brown, and black) and a piece of white paper and asked to draw a person. Schofield (1978) found that the race of the child producing the drawing is related to race of the figure drawn, and that black children are less accepting of their racial group membership than whites. Results confirmed their hypotheses that “white should be more likely to draw figures that are clearly white than blacks are to draw figures that are clearly black” (Schofield, 1978, p. 311).

Dutton et al., (1998) conducted a study in 159 fourth-grade children (98 White and 63 Black) using the Draw-A-Person, the spontaneous self-concept test, and the picture test to examine a child’s racial identity based on the school’s population according to school setting (integrated, Black, and White). It was hypothesized that the children in the integrated school would make their races obvious in their drawings, compared to children in the other two school settings (Dutton et al., 1998). Children were given a piece of 8<sup>1/2</sup>” x 11” white paper and a box of multicultural crayons containing eight colors: white, apricot peach, mahogany, tan, burnt

sienna, sepia, and black, rather than the standard set of crayons used in the Schofield (1978) study. In addition, contrary to Schofield (1978), students were given directions to draw themselves rather than to simply draw a person. It was found that, "...children in the predominantly White school produced drawings that depicted their race more obviously than did children from either of the other schools" (Dutton et al., 1998, p. 50). Dutton et al. hypothesized that Blacks in an integrated setting were self-conscious about depicting their skin color in their drawings due to their awareness of society's racial tensions and greater acceptance of Whites as the "norm" (Dutton et al., 1998). Similarly, Schofield (1978) hypothesized that, "...because black children are more likely to feel conflict than white children over their racial group membership, they are less likely to color in the faces of the figures drawn on the Draw-A-Person than are white children (p. 315).

Pfeffer (1984) conducted a study in 129 Nigerian school children, between the ages of 7-9 years old, to investigate ethnic identity. It was found that, similar to Schofield (1978), Pfeffer found that "few black children drew figures which could be clearly categorized as black" (Pfeffer, 1987, p. 780), although their interpretation of the results differed. Pfeffer (1987) noted that rather than black children lacking pride in their race and culture as found in studies conducted in the Western context, Pfeffer identified that Nigerian children may not find that drawing a person is a realistic drawing, and that race/skin color may not be a relevant issue (Pfeffer, 1987). The possible effects of instruction to participants were therefore studied in Pfeffer (1987)'s Draw-A-Person test to measure ethnic identity. Participants in this study included 134 Nigerian school children ranging from 8-10 years old. By giving the instruction, "Draw yourself" versus the instruction of "Draw a person" the number of Black children and the use of darker colors increased (Pfeffer, 1987).

Past studies involving the Draw-A-Person test measured the ability of participants to draw of picture of a person or themselves indicated racial awareness and self-identification (Byrd, 2012). The present study differs from past studies by (a) being instructed to draw the classroom community (b) implementing a series of culturally relevant and anti-bias activities, and (c) providing students with both standard set of markers and multicultural markers and colored pencils. It was hypothesized that culturally relevant, anti-bias education will enhance a child's ability to portray the members of his or her class in a drawing of their classroom community. A four-week span of lessons and activities aimed to increase a student's awareness of the peers that exist in his or her classroom community. In addition, semi structured interviews were conducted to elicit additional information to answer the following questions: are students aware of the differences and similarities between themselves and their peers, and what are their perceptions of skin color. Lastly a survey was conducted to educators involved in the study to address if a culturally relevant, anti-bias curriculum feasible and effective for preschool students.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

Participants in this study included students enrolled in the early childhood education and assistance program (ECEAP) program located in the Pacific Northwest. Students in these programs are provided with free services to support early learning preschool, family support and parent involvement, and child health coordination and nutrition. Administered by the Washington State Department of Early Learning, eligibility is based on families that are at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. In addition, up to 10 percent of ECEAP families who are above the income limits based on developmental factors (developmental delay, disability, or other special needs) or environmental factors (family violence, chemical

dependency, child protective serves) are eligible. Lastly, if space is available, children who are in foster care, homeless, or on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash grant are able to enroll in ECEAP.

A total of 18 preschool children, participated in this study. Students were required to be four years old by fall of the school year; therefore the current classroom was composed of four and five year old students. Out of the 18 (10 boys and 8 girls) in the group, two students have Individualized Education Plans; one student has a diagnosis of autism, while the other a diagnosis of developmental delay. Participants attend the ECEAP program five days a week for three hours and forty minutes each day. Based on family reports, the sample includes 7 Black, 5 White, 5 Mixed-race, and 1 Latino students. The participants represented a diverse classroom community, and were active participants in both small and large group activities.

### **Procedure**

A series of culturally relevant and anti-bias activities were implemented in the ECEAP classroom over a span of four weeks. The culturally relevant, anti-bias curriculum was titled, “Classroom Community.” Overall the goals of the unit was for students to understand, appreciate, and respect differences and similarities in their classroom and school, and build a safe and supportive classroom community where students can learn together and value the range of diversity. Three educators, one special education teacher and two graduate students in the early childhood special education department, who had been working with the ECEAP class since the fall, implemented the lessons and administered the tests. In a total of ten school days, covering a span of four weeks, two large group circle activities and five lessons were included in the “Classroom Community” unit.

The four-week unit aimed to increase each student's ability to understand, appreciate, and respect differences and similarities in their classroom and school, as well as build a safe and supportive classroom community. A portion of the "Classroom Community" unit involved modified versions of lessons presented in the Teaching Tolerance program based on concepts of difference and diversity. The program is dedicated to reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations and supporting equitable school experiences for our nation's children. In 1991, the program was founded by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit civil rights organization committed to fighting hate and bigotry while pursuing justice for the most vulnerable members of society. Teaching Tolerance serves to support students and teachers to respect individual differences through free educational materials and curricular kits. The term "tolerance" in this case is "a way of thinking and feeling- but most importantly, of acting-that gives us peace in our individuality, respect for those unlike us, the wisdom to discern human values and the courage to act upon them" (Teaching Tolerance, 2011). The series called, "The Different Colors of Beauty" aims to "help students develop their racial or ethnic identities in a safe and open classroom environment, and appreciate the broad spectrum of beauty in our diverse, multicultural world" (Teaching Tolerance, 2011). Lesson 1 of the "Classroom Community" unit was based on the "Self Portrait" activity provided by the Teaching Tolerance program. Rather than having students draw a self-portrait, students were asked to draw a portrait of the entire class.

The second resource used to develop the "Classroom Community" unit was derived from Stacy York's book *Roots and Wings*. York (2003) designed activities to implement culturally relevant and anti-bias education in a classroom environment in a clear and organized fashion. Modified versions of "Draw Me/Draw You," "Just Like Me," and "I'm Special Book" were the foundation of three of the lesson taught in the "Classroom Community" unit. York (2003)

incorporates “culturally relevant activities that strengthen children’s connection to their family and home culture” (p. 191), as well as activities that “foster each child’s positive, empathetic interaction with diversity among people” (p. 205). Activities provided by York were age-appropriate to preschool aged children, and reasonable to implement. Lesson 2 titled, “Draw Me, Draw You” from York (2003) purpose is for students to appreciate the physical characteristics of others while experiencing positive, respectful interactions with people who are different. Teachers encouraged students to pair up and take turns drawing each other. Teachers asked children to notice the color of skin, color of eyes, facial features, and type and color of hair. In Lesson 3, “Just Like Me” teachers read a children’s book depicting students from around the world. Similar to on York (2003)’s activity “Just Like Me,” students were asked to recognize human similarities and differences in the book. Teacher first read the book that was accompanied with a musical CD that sang along with the words in the book. Teachers then interviewed children on how they were the same or different to children in the book, and children in the classroom. The purpose of this activity was to encourage children to develop a positive attitude toward human similarities and differences. Lastly, in Lesson 4, “I Am Special” students had the opportunity to create individual books with the purpose of expressing their self-identity (York, 2003). Students were able to share their completed books with their peers, and discover similarities and differences between one another. Finally, Lesson 5 involved a modified version of Lesson 1 for the purposes of data collection.

During both large and small group instruction, students were required to follow the rules of the “Classroom Community” unit. The rules included: “think, speak and listen, it’s okay to pass or say I don’t know, and be friendly.” In the large group, a variety of songs, books, and

discussions reflected activities conducted in small group instruction. For the five small group lessons, students were pulled out into the hallway in groups of three to four students.

In the beginning and end of the “Classroom Community” unit, students were asked to draw their classroom community using a variety of materials. Students were given a sheet of paper, multicultural marker and colored pencils, as well as a standard set of markers. The instruction was given to draw their classroom community, paying close attention to the color of people’s skin, eyes, and hair. Students had access to their classroom picture as well as also a chart displaying each student and teachers’ name and individual picture. After instructions were given, each group was encouraged to work for ten minutes. Students were reinforced with preferred items after working for the entire 10-minute period. All 18 students were divided into six small groups. Due to time constraints, all small group lessons lasted for two days each, where three groups worked for one day, and the remaining three groups worked the second day. Drawings from day 1 and 2 were compared with drawings completed on day 9 and 10 of the themed unit. The initial hypothesis states that students will increase their ability to represent their classmates in a drawing of their classroom community drawing following a series of culturally relevant and anti-bias activities are administered.

### **Measures**

Children were given a large sheet of paper and a box of multicultural markers (tan, mahogany, tawny, golden beige, terra cotta, beige, bronze and sienna), multicultural pencils (melon, almond, wheat, peach, toast, fawn, cinnamon, olive, gingerbread, mahogany, chestnut and ebony), and a standard set of markers (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, grey, black and brown). Students were given the instruction to draw a picture of their classroom community. They were asked to draw their classroom community on the first day and last day of

the unit. Two research assistants calculated the number of identifiable human figures depicted in each drawing. Knowledge of when the drawings were produced and the student who created the drawing were kept unknown to the research assistants. The research assistants scored the classroom community drawings, and a mean number of human figures drawn by each student as well as the class as a whole before and after intervention will be calculated. In addition, interobserver agreement of data will be obtained represented by the percentage of agreement between the total number of responses recorded by two observers and is found by calculating the smaller of the counts divided by the larger count, and multiplied by 100.

To elicit information on the students' awareness, self-identification, and attitudes, questions were administered to the students throughout the implementation of the culturally relevant, anti-bias activities. Although this procedure was not standardized, it was useful to discover the participants' perception about their racial identity in comparison to the students in the class. Some questions addressed were: who is part of our classroom community, what is skin color, and how are you the same or different the kids in the class? Responses to the questions were videotaped for future analysis.

## **Results**

The purpose of this study was to compare the number of human figures represented before and after the culturally relevant, anti-bias curriculum was implemented. The study started with 18 participants. Student #12 and student #13 were not present for both days of data collection, therefore it was not possible to compare pre and post classroom drawings. In addition, on day 9 of instruction, three of the small groups were not provided the full ten minutes to complete their classroom drawings, therefore 9 additional students were not examined. Out of the remaining 16 students, 7 students were analyzed. Based on three research assistants who

scored the drawings, the average number of total human figures drawn by the preschool students reported a baseline of 37 total human figures were identified. After the “Classroom Community” unit was implemented, total number of human figures counted was 51. In addition, average human figures drawn per student increased from 5.21 to 7.29 figures drawn per student. As hypothesized, students increased the number of human figures depicted in their classroom community drawings after a four-week culturally relevant, anti-bias curriculum was implemented. Interobserver agreement between the two research assistants consisted of 92% for the first two days. Observer 1 calculated a total of 35 human figures depicted, versus Observer 2 who calculated 38 total human figures drawn by the 7 participants examined in the study. Data collected on the last two days revealed a 100% interobserver agreement between both scorers.

The first interview occurred in large group circle, prior to the implementation of the curriculum. The special education teacher asked what is the same about children in their classroom community. Students first made comments about the large number of students in the class, and one girl noticed that all the teachers are the same, because they are teachers. The teacher then asked students to notice the color of skin, color of hair, or color of eyes and asked to notice what was the same or different. One girl stated that some teachers have short hair and some have long, followed by a boy who stated, “we have different skin.” When the teacher asked if anybody else noticed something different about people’s skin, a girl replied, “Umm, all people talk different.” When the teacher asked for any last comments about same or different, one boy commented about two students in the class who he felt had the same skin. His teacher asked him to tell more about it, and he said they had white skin. Both students he identified had family reports of identifying White as their ethnic/racial identity. The teacher then asked the students, “What is skin color? One boy stated that, “we have yellow skin, or like black skin” as

he points to his forearm. The boy even identified the students in the circle who he said, “Match the same skin.” The boy was able to correctly name the students in his class who had black skin. Next, a student whose parent reported his ethnic/racial identify was White commented that his skin was the same as a girl who was mixed race by saying, “my skin is red, and her skin is red.” Following the classroom discussion, the teacher read the book, “It’s Okay to Be Different” to stress the importance to appreciate and acceptance of similarities and differences among each other.

The second interview occurred in Lesson 3 where students read and song lyrics in a children’s book titled, *We All Sing with the Same Voice* by J. Philip Miller and Sheppard M. Green. Students were asked ways that kids in the book were the same and different as kids in the classroom community. Overall themes developed from this activity, were that students were able to identify with the characters in the book based on physical appearance, emotions, family structure, and daily routines and activities. In addition students were able to relate the characters in the book to members in their classroom community. For example, one student commented to a character in the book and said, “She’s black like me, and that kid too!” Another student extended the conversation by saying, I have a little bit of dark, and she has a little bit of dark, because the light flashes (on) my arms, so that’s why my skin is light-dark.” Overall, student were able to express their observation regarding skin color, hair color, and type of hair in the small group setting more often than in a large group setting. When students were asked, “what is skin color” or “why do people have different skin colors” students did not respond as easily in either the small group or large group setting. A majority of students replied with, “I don’t know” or shrugged their shoulder indicated they were unsure. Results from the semi-structure interview validate the point made by Ramsey and Myers (1990) in that the most physical features,

predominantly skin colors, are most prominent to children (cited in Byrd, 2012, p.4). Based on the interviews, it was evident that students were aware of the different skin colors that represent the classroom community, yet struggled with the meaning to skin color.

Implementing a culturally relevant, anti-bias curriculum involves educators who feel comfortable and prepared to teach each activity. A survey was conducted to investigate staff experiences after the study was completed. Overall, all three individuals reported that it is highly important for preschool children to learn about the differences and similarities amongst their peers. Responses were based on a rating scale as well as short answer responses. It was found that two out of three staff members felt comfortable while teaching the anti-bias curriculum, all three educators felt somewhat prepared to teach each lesson plan, and the most highly preferred activity was Lesson 2: “Draw Me, Draw you.” When asked how to report concerns, Educator 1 noted that, “It’s a difficult topic, because there’s a fine balance between unintentionally forcing your own views and opinions on children, and letting them explore things on their own and drawing their own conclusions in a healthy and appropriate way.” Similarly, Educator 3 commented, “...I found it difficult to not impart my own ideas, especially when children demonstrate biases that worry or offend me.” When asked to report the feasibility of implementing the lessons, Educator 1 states, “The lessons were broken down and explained in a way that the kids could understand the content and generalize it to different situations. The lessons were fun, and the kids enjoyed most of them and thus were engaged throughout the activities, this allowed me to spend less time worrying about "managing", and more time focusing on the lesson.” In addition, Educator 2 felt that the environmental structure was practical. Educator 2 remarks, “I thought that the small group pull-out set up worked well. I also thought that the materials we used (colored pencils and markers) were feasible in terms of

management, mess factor, and quality of results.” Comments made by Educator 3 suggest important suggestions for future implementation. She notes, “The activities themselves were definitely feasible, but did need to be shortened and/or modified to fit the abilities of the children in our classroom. The intensity of lessons was fine for a short-term project, but would need to be rethought if it were to be implemented throughout the school year in order to accommodate other curricular objectives.” Similarly, Educator 3 felt that there was not enough time to teach the material. Educator 3 suggests that for future implementation, “Allow for enough time to devote to these lessons. I think that it is very important to spend the time to do a good job teaching anti-bias curriculum, and I think that we were unable to fit it all in during our 10-15 minute small groups. I also think it deserves to be taught ongoing throughout the year.” Responses made by the adults who implemented the activities were both provided useful and valid information for teachers who plan to implement a culturally relevant, anti-bias curriculum.

### **Discussion**

The present study supported the hypothesis that implementing a four-week culturally relevant, anti-bias lessons and activities would increase a student’s ability to represent his or her classmates in a drawing of the classroom community, indicating an increased awareness to one’s peers. In addition, the semi-structured interviews provided information on the students’ knowledge of the similarities and differences between one another, and their perception of skin color. Future studies can address how well the human figures drawn by the students reflect the racial identity of the students in the class. A well-established coding system can be used to investigate how well each figure drawn accurately portrayed their classmates. In addition, study conducted over a longer period of time (preferable a year long study) can help to identify a preschooler’s ability to increase one’s awareness, identification, and attitude towards

racial/ethnic identity. Examinations should include the effects of using culturally relevant-anti bias activities based on themed units, or the effect of increasing child to adult interactions. Based on specially designed conversations. Discussion topics could address a list of vocabulary and terms to help students increase their knowledge of self and group identity. Lastly, identifying the most suitable qualitative and quantitative measurement approaches to investigate the perception of young children in regards to racial attitudes and preferences should continue to be examined.

A number of factors influenced the results in this study. Although each lesson included detailed instruction of how to implement each small and large group activity, each educator differed in the way they assisted children to complete the activity. Teachers varied the type and frequency of verbal, gestural, and physical prompts given to each student. In addition it was observed that teachers varied the time when they presented the standard set of markers. It was observed that some teachers encouraged students to use the multicultural markers first before allowing them to use the standard marker colors, while at other times the standard marker colors were given to students only after they requested it. If students did not request the standard set of markers, they only utilized the multicultural markers and colored pencils during the entire ten-minute period. In addition, after a student drew a human figure, a teacher would indicate the figure by noting the initials next to it. When children in a group of three or four are drawing a picture simultaneously, it is highly possible for the administrator to fail to notice each human figure the student draws. Scorers reported that the initials noted next to each human figure was useful when calculated the results, yet some figures were not labeled which led to inaccurate counts. The length of time was also a factor that influenced which drawings were used for analysis. During the post intervention, on day nine, the timer was started at the beginning of the small group activity, rather than when the students actually started drawing their pictures. The

actual length of time allotted to work ranged from 5 minutes and 13 seconds to 6 minutes and 27 seconds. Students were not given the full ten minutes allowed to complete the task; therefore data collected from 9 students were not counted during data analysis. When scorers counted the number of human figures drawn, they were required to use a colored photocopy of the original drawings. Scorers reported it was difficult to analyze the drawings when students used lighter colors, and the copier machine did not reflect an exact replication of their original drawings.

To conduct interviews with preschool children was also difficult in this setting. Not all children feel comfortable talking in a group. In addition, teachers reported students where English was not their primary language, or other students who had difficulties with expressive language ability. The technology equipment also posed to be a challenge when interpreting results from interviews. The sound quality was not optimal, especially when all small groups took place in the school hallway. A number of hallway distractions affected both the ability for students to respond as well as the quality of sound when they did respond. The environment also impacted a student's ability to depict their classroom community. It was noticed in the videos that students drew peers and teachers that were physical present in their small group setting. It was evident that learning and testing environment played a significant role in how students learned. In future studies, it would be interesting to have students draw their classroom community inside the classroom, when all students are present. Also, giving students more time to complete their drawings may have been more effective. A limitation of the study was the design. The design was one-group, quasi-experimental. Such a design provides preliminary information as to the topic of interest. It does not provide controls over other variable.

Responses from the survey given to the educators who participated in this study addressed suggestions for future educators who plan to implement an anti-bias curriculum in a

preschool classroom, one emphasized that, “Don’t be afraid to make mistakes – It’s a process, and there is value for both the adults and children involved to take the risk because it’s the right thing to do. The anti-bias mentality has to be infused into the culture of the classroom, and the idea embedded throughout the year, not just addressed through discrete packaged units or activities” Educator 3. Educator 3 also suggested, “Not teaching, ‘correct’ concepts -- I believe it's far more valuable to elicit the children's thinking around diversity and to foster deeper understanding around social justice by challenge their assumptions...”

Overall, the study allowed educators to implement a four-week unit centralized around increasing each student’s awareness of their self-identity, recognize the similarities and differences with their peers, and the ability to appreciate their classroom diversity. Using the Draw-A-Person test allows researchers to investigate the topics of racial/ethnic awareness and identification, yet lacks in the ability to capture attitudes towards racial/ethnic groups. In conclusion, the use of a culturally relevant, anti-bias curriculum was found to enhance a child’s ability to represent members in the classroom community through drawings, yet further research is needed to identify how to teach young children about topics of racial/ethnic identify, attitudes, and preferences. In addition counting the number of human figures represented in a child’s drawing may or may not be a reliable indicator of how aware a student is about their surrounding community, therefore it is crucial that future studies investigate various forms of measuring a child’s racial awareness. The importance of culturally relevant learning activities is to ensure that educators modify teaching methods to acknowledge the diverse cultural backgrounds of students who represent a variety of ethnic backgrounds, where each student feels welcomed in their classroom community.

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