

Multicultural Education in Xavier Learning Community, Chiang Rai Province, Thailand

Cuong Nguyen Phu

Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

ABSTRACT

The purpose of multicultural education is not only to preserve cultural traditions among multiethnic students but also to foster critical thinking and reflection on their learning and the events happening around them. While many countries have integrated multicultural education to address the diverse needs of their student populations, Thailand's implementation has been limited, particularly at the preschool and secondary levels in some southern public schools. This research addresses this gap by focusing on a higher education institution in northern Thailand, Xavier Learning Community (XLC), which caters to students from various religions and ethnic backgrounds. The research aims to understand how XLC implements multicultural education to foster an inclusive learning environment. Employing qualitative methods, such as participant and non-participant observation, interviews with 24 participants (including Jesuit priests, teachers, lecturers, and students), and document analysis, the study examines the curriculum and activities at XLC that promote multiculturalism, critical thinking, and student reflection. The research findings indicate that XLC embodies the principles of multicultural education by providing equal educational opportunities, preparing students for a diverse society, and promoting awareness of social justice. XLC's approach effectively integrates students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum, creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Notably, courses in critical thinking and reflective formation empower students to address societal issues and advocate for positive change. This study provides insights into the effective implementation of multicultural education in higher education settings, emphasizing its potential to establish inclusive and equitable learning environments.

Keywords: critical thinking, diverse ethnicity, reflective formation, Thailand