

Charles Ahovissi's Action Plan to Promote Cultural Diversity



Goals:

- ✓ To teach people to appreciate and value cultural diversity, help students understand the social living conditions of other groups, understand people of different backgrounds, and understand the interrelatedness and interdependence of cultures.
- ✓ Assist students to be able to develop skills to interact in a multicultural world and evaluate their attitudes towards other races, religions, and cultures, develop a deep respect and understanding of various cultures other than their own.
- ✓ To showcase the beauty of diversity by making a connection through the curriculum: social studies- history and geography; world cultures- traditions, culture, values, and beliefs; and physical education- rhythm, dance, movement and health.

Objectives:

- ✓ To introduce students to diversity and cultural differences.
- ✓ To persuade students to learn and promote cultural diversity.
- ✓ To attach positive feelings to multicultural experiences so that each child will feel included and valued, and will feel friendly and respectful toward people from other ethnic and cultural groups.

Commitment: Charles Ahovissi is committed to using multicultural education to teach students to accept, understand and appreciate culture, race, social class, religious and gender differences. He will prepare students to live and work in the real world so that they contribute to society. Mr. Ahovissi has a responsibility to incorporate aspects of different cultures in any area of education, help students understand, investigate and determine how culture influences the way that knowledge is constructed and finally guide students to learn to accept and appreciate other cultures by being sensitive to students' preconceived attitudes. As a diverse

and knowledgeable teacher, Mr. Ahovissi plans to help students to embrace and participate in different social activities. He believes students should be exposed to different cultures and ethnicities, interact with each other, socially, emotionally, and physically so that they become more motivated, open-minded and to get ready for the future's challenges. Finally, he will allow students to explore multicultural activities and appreciate the importance of working together as one nation, one people with different beliefs.



Experience in Cultural Diversity & Background

Charles Ahovissi is a professional artist dancer, drummer, choreographer, educator, costume designer, tailor and Artistic/Executive Director of a non-profit art organization, African Culture Connection. Since 1986, Mr. Ahovissi has toured the world as a member of the National dance and music company of Benin, West Africa, performing and teaching traditional African dance and music. Now as a citizen of the United States of America, and residing in Omaha, he wants to share his knowledge and love of Africa through traditional dancing and drumming to foster a better understanding of Africa's diverse and beautiful cultures. He is an approved teaching and performing artist through the Nebraska and Iowa Arts Councils. Charles has participated in three

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Seminars: Planning Effective Arts-Integrated Residencies for Students; Laying a Foundation- Defining Arts Integration; and Anatomy of a Lesson- Designing Instruction at the University Northern of Iowa.

Having a better understanding of cultural diversity, Charles Ahovissi has been a teaching artist in residencies throughout the country. For the last 10 years, he has taught at several schools districts such as: Omaha Public Schools, Millard Public Schools, Council Bluffs Public Schools, Elkhorn Public Schools, District 66, Kearney Public Schools and Lincoln Public Schools making a difference in many students' lives. Mr. Ahovissi also traveled to several continents such as: Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America, teaching, performing, and promoting traditional African culture for over 25 years.

Through traditional dancing and drumming during public performances, school assemblies, residencies, and workshops, Mr. Ahovissi promotes unity and multiculturalism while offering students a fun, social and physical activity. Charles provides multicultural lessons by giving students authentic, hands-on experiences with African culture. He creates an authentic African village ambiance and uses ceremonial African clothes as well as traditional instruments to teach about African culture. Charles incorporates a variety of activities into his educational programs depending on the length. Creating African crafts such as masks, necklaces, shakers, headbands, and ankle bells can also be incorporated into residencies.

Resources:

Nebraska Arts Council
1004 Farnam Street, Plaza Level of the Burlington Building,
Omaha, NE 68102
402-595-2122

<http://www.nebraskaartscouncil.org/ArtistDirectory/?search=artistIndividual&name=Charles%20Ahovissi>

<http://www.nebraskaartscouncil.org/ArtistDirectory/?search=ntpIndividual&sname=Ahovissi,%20Charles>

Iowa Arts Council
600 E Locusts
Des Moines, IA 50319-0290
515.281.5773

<http://roster.iowaartscouncil.org/portfolio.cfm?id=767>

African Culture Connection
1823 South 155th Ave
Omaha, Nebraska 68144
402-238-8259

<http://www.africancultureconnection.org/>

<http://www.ahovissi.com/>

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Mr. Ahovissi prepares students to live and work in the real world; he helps children to embrace and participate in different social activities and to expose them to different cultures and ethnicities. As a progressive teacher, Charles Ahovissi uses a project method to transform his classroom into a collaborative and democratic learning community. He allows children to think and be free to develop their own ideas about the subject. After hands-on activities, students are able to appreciate the importance of working together as one nation, one people with different beliefs. He is a teacher who helps children create their own knowledge by experience. The transformation of the curriculum gives children opportunities to correct their mistakes as they go. After he has a better understanding of what children's needs are, he provides several trial activities and instruction methods to persuade them to make a right choice about what they want to be in their life which is the real world we are living in. Instructionally flexible, he uses a repertoire of learning activities such as problem solving, field trips, creative artistic expression, physical exercise, nature study, crafts, reading, writing, music, and dance projects that involve a culminating event (student demonstration.) he develops a knowledge base in children and adolescents development and psychology and in the skills and subjects he teaches. He always creates a safe, developmentally friendly, and engaging classroom environments in which children learn at their own pace, according to their own interests. He is a progressive, rooted in pragmatism. He educates individuals according to their interests and needs. He acts as a facilitator and gives instruction using a curriculum full of problem solving and group activities and projects.

The Power of Charles' Theme Combinations

Due to the fact that present is unstable and confusing, he looks back to collect information. That is how his context and input themes work together. After being inquisitive, he uses his distinct way to analyze the symptom, identify what is wrong, why the present is unstable and then he solves the problem. Fascinated by the future, he sees in detail what the future might hold. This detailed picture keeps pulling him forward into tomorrow. "What if this happened? Okay, well what if this happened?" This recurring question helps him looking around the next corner because he would like to leave his family and friends a legacy of love and respect.

Plan For the Future:

On a practical level, Mr. Ahovissi will incorporate students' personal experiences and cultural knowledge into classroom activities to promote a multicultural environment; popular knowledge (facts and concepts), mainstream academic knowledge (traditional ideas and views) and school knowledge (textbook information). He will transform academic knowledge. This encompasses ideas that challenge mainstream knowledge and encourages students to critically evaluate ideas and beliefs.

- ✓ Use a project method to transform the classroom into a collaborative, democratic learning community.
- ✓ Consider children's cultural identities and be aware of their biases.
- ✓ Ahovissi will take several approaches to integrate and develop a multicultural perspective. The promotion of a positive self-concept is essential, as is a focus on activities that

highlight the similarities and differences of all children's lives. Children's play, particularly role-play, is an excellent strategy for developing new perspectives on culture and lifestyles.

- ✓ Ahovissi will provide several trial activities and instruction methods to persuade students to make a right choice about what they want to be in their life.
- ✓ Instructionally flexible, Ahovissi will use a repertoire of learning activities such as problem solving, field trips, creative artistic expression, physical exercise, nature study, crafts, reading, writing, music, and dance projects that will involve a culminating event (student demonstration.)
- ✓ Ahovissi will Create a safe, developmentally friendly, and engaging classroom environments in which students learn at their own pace, according to their own interests.

Calendar:

January	Jewish/American
February	African/American
March	Asian/American
April	Native/American
May	European/American
September	Hispanic
October	Sexual Orientation/Gender
November	Islam
December	Celebration of Diversity

For more information, contact Charles Ahovissi at (402) 238-8259, send an email to ahovissi@cox.net or visit <http://www.AfricanCultureConnection.org>