

# RESEARCH INSIGHTS IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING

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## CHAPTER 8:

# Teaching English in Multicultural Classrooms

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ZALEHA ESA

*Teachers' knowledge and competence in dealing with classes of diverse cultures can either facilitate or impede teaching and learning to a great extent. The aim of the study was to examine teachers' perceptions of multiculturalism in the English teaching and learning context. Data collected were based on interviews conducted on a class of 16 student teachers. Findings of this qualitative study revealed that teachers generally do have a basic understanding of what teaching a multicultural class means. More importantly the study revealed that there is a need to train, especially novice teachers to be multiculturally competent in preparing them to teach in classrooms of diverse cultures, as they play a vital role in helping students understand and appreciate the differences and similarities among the various ethnic, religious and cultural groups.*

**Keyword:** Multicultural classrooms, English language teaching, Teacher education

## INTRODUCTION

Our cultural background can affect the way we teach and learn (APA, 2003). Students live in a diverse world and teachers have the responsibility to provide the relevant opportunities to apply this intercultural understanding in their daily lives. It is therefore important for teachers to remain mindful of their values and seek to identify and find ways to engage in culturally competent teaching Davis (1993). For students to understand other cultures and their effects on others, there is a need to infuse multiculturalism in the curriculum. Understanding what multiculturalism