

The culturally responsive pedagogy education essay



Today's classrooms oblige teachers to tutor students varying in culture, language, abilities and various other characteristics... Teachers must form a classroom culture where every student despite of their cultural and linguistic background are greeted, supported and supplied with the best aptitude to learn (Richards, et al).

In my opinion, culture is essential to learning as it plays a role not only in conversing and receiving information but also in determining the thinking process of individuals as well as groups. A pedagogy that acknowledges, reacts to, and celebrates fundamental cultures offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures and prepares students to live in a pluralistic society. Culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that identifies the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Culturally responsive pedagogy is based on student-centered approach to teaching whereby the students' distinctive cultural potential are classified and nurtured to encourage student achievement and a sense of well-being about the student's cultural place in the world. As from my knowledge, culturally responsive pedagogy comprises of three functional dimensions: the personal dimension, instructional dimension, and the institutional dimension.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:

The personal dimension is a process involving emotional and cognitive factors whereby teachers must engage in their teaching so that it becomes more culturally responsive. In fact, there are two components in a personal

dimension. These components are self-reflection and self-exploration. Self-reflection is the most essential part of the personal dimension. This is because teachers need to honestly examine themselves in terms of attitudes, belief, values as well as their ultimate goal in order to create a more welcoming and safe environment for the students and their families (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Self-exploration is the opportunity that is created to “ explore their personal histories and experiences, as well as the history and current experiences of their students and families” (Richards, et al). A better understanding and knowledge enables teachers to appreciate the differences and deliver unbiased instructions which ultimately prepare them to address the needs of all their students.

The instructional dimension is basically instructions use through activities, practices, materials and challenges that are associated with teaching cultural responsiveness in a classroom. The institutional dimension of culturally responsive pedagogy highlights the need for reorganization of the cultural features that are distressing the institution of schools, school policies and procedures (including distribution of finances and resources), and society involvement. According to Gorski and Covert^{1/4} there are six types of condition that have to be implemented in classrooms to ensure culturally responsive educational curriculum and setting in order to support students. First and foremost, teachers must ensure that every student have an equal opportunity to achieve her or his full potential. Secondly, students must be geared up to competently involve themselves in a more progressive intercultural society. Thirdly, teachers must also be geared up to effectively facilitate learning for every student no matter how culturally different or

similar from her or himself. Fourthly, the school must be a dynamic participant in ending subjugation within their own territory, to produce a socially and critically active and awareness in students. Fifthly, in terms of student-centered and comprehensive of the voices and experiences of the students should be implied in their education. Last but not least, the educators, activists, and others must take a more active role in reexamining all educational practices and how they affect the learning of all students: testing methods, teaching approaches, evaluation and assessment, school.

*Gorski, P. & Covert, B. (2000). Multicultural pavilion: Defining multicultural education.

The instructional dimension consists of materials, activities which can form basic instructions as well as strategies. There are about twenty-four Cultural Responsive Instructional Guidelines to endorse active learning, continues review, scaffolding, providing instruction to context and other. (Adapted from Klump, J., McNeir, G. 2005, and Artiles and Ortiz (2002)). In fact, there are ten additional guidelines to this cultural responsive instruction:

1. Students' differences as well as their commonalities are acknowledged.
2. Validate students' cultural identity in classroom practices and instructional materials.
3. Students are educated about the diversity of the world around them.
4. Justice and mutual respect are promoted among students.
5. Assess students' ability and achievement validly.

6. Foster a positive interrelationship in the midst of students, their families, the community and school.
7. Motivate students to become active participants in their learning.
8. Students are encouraged to think critically.
9. Challenge students to strive for excellence as defined by their potential.
10. Show support students in becoming socially and politically conscious.

(Banks & Banks, 2004; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1999 cited in Richards, et al. 2006, pp. 8-11.)

The institutional dimension is an institution that emphasizes on the needs to transform the cultural aspects that are affecting three areas such as the schools organization, school policies and systems which includes the allowance of school finances and resources (Little, 1999). Organization of the school includes the administrative structure which in a way it relates to variety. Organization of school also uses the physical space in developing schools and arranging classrooms. School policies and procedures refer to policies and practice that may result an impact on the deliverance of services to students from diverse backgrounds. Last but not least, the community involvement is more concerned towards the institutional instruction to community contribution in which families and society are estimated to discover ways to be more involved in the development of school, instead of the school looking for acquaintances with families and society.

Conclusion:

In a nutshell, I believe that these three dimensions that were mentioned above create critical understanding of the effectiveness of a culturally responsive pedagogy. Cultural responsive pedagogy enables students to learn about their own culture as well as the culture of others. Students will also learn to appreciate and treasure cultural differences around them. Teachers are highly looked upon as role model by the society. Therefore, it is important that teachers must be culturally responsive so as to demonstrate positive values and be an example to students. In fact, extra effort of teachers is required to enhance high levels of development in students and within this process; student should never lose any element of their cultural identity.