

Culturally responsive teaching assignment

[Sociology](#)



Sean S. Culturally Responsive Teaching Culturally Responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). This approach to teaching encompasses how knowledge is both communicated and perceived by the students. The teacher must have a good relationship with the parents, have high expectations, learn about their students culture, have culturally mediated student-centered instruction, willing to reshape the curriculum, and be a facilitator in order to accomplish this method of teaching.

These are key points a teacher must be willing to do if they intend to be an effective teacher especially in a highly culturally diverse area like central Texas. Having a good relationship with the parents is extremely important because nobody knows your students best. Conversations about where the student needs improvement, where they succeeding, their disabilities, and how they can help each other help the child succeed. When families share their " funds of knowledge" with the school community, teachers get a better idea of their students' background knowledge and abilities, and how they learn best (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992, 134-135). " Having multiple open houses throughout the year is a good example of how to keep a good relationship with the parents. The normal once a school year open house only allows the families to meet the teacher for just a few minutes. That's barely enough time to learn each other's names and faces.

Host one per month will allow a closer relationship with the parents and they will be able to see the progress the class is making first hand. Requiring parents to sign weekly progress reports with a section to communicate any issues or praises is another way to keep a good relationship with the parents.

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Normal progress reports are only given once every three weeks and there is only a place for the parents to sign which makes them almost useless. These types of examples allow the teacher to understand their student's parents including their culture.

Enforcing the belief that every student should set high standards in their school work is a must because the quality of their work is based off of their own standards. Effective and consistent communication of high expectation helps students develop a healthy self-concept (Rist, 1970). These expectations must be very clear in a classroom full of students from different cultures. A page on class work expectations should be included in the first day take home syllabus. It should explain how students should complete their work and the quality of it by using simple yet detailed words so every family can understand it.

The most important part the teacher must do is be very clear and detailed on directions. If a student does not understand an assignment then the teacher most likely did not explain it well. This situation is commonly misinterpreted as if the student was just not paying attention. Clear directions will almost eliminate any confusion on an assignment due to cultural differences.

Teachers must learn about their student's cultures if they want to educate them to the best of their ability. Many of the students in culturally diverse classrooms will want to learn in different ways.

Some will want to learn in pairs, groups, as a class, or just alone. If the teacher is educated in their culture then lessons can be adjusted to appeal to every student as much as possible instead of forcing some to forget about

their culture and learn like others. Students from minority cultures may feel pressured to disavow themselves of their cultural beliefs and norms in order to assimilate into the majority culture. This, however, can interfere with their emotional and cognitive development and result in school failure (Sheets, 1999). Having student-centered instruction is almost required in a culturally diverse classroom.

This type of instruction gives the students more freedom in making the assignment more relevant to their culture. An example of this is giving a broad research assignment that will allow them to choose something from their own culture if they want. A more specific example is have them form book clubs or literature circles and have them give presentations about the culture they read about (Daniels, 2002). The instruction should also be culturally mediated which will allow the students to have their own interpretation instead of having the class think there is only one right way to view something.

By being allowed to learn in different ways or to share viewpoints and perspectives in a given situation based on their own cultural and social experiences, students become active participants in their learning (Nieto, 1996). Teachers can do this in their classroom simply by encouraging them to let their culture influence their answers. Teaching the students the curriculum is what is important. It is not the teachers place to try and change the views of their students based off of their culture. Teachers must be open to reshape the curriculum to keep it interesting to the students.

For example, students in central Austin could care less about population statistics of Chicago. The lesson would be more interesting if the teacher simply changes the statistics to Austin. By using the students' personal experiences to develop new skills and knowledge, teachers make meaningful connections between school and real-life situations (Padron, Waxman, ; Rivera, 2002). Teachers should use more than one resource to teach the course and allow student more freedom on assignments to make it more relevant to them.

This is more important to culturally diverse classrooms. If one specific question is given then only a few students are going to be able to relate and find it interesting. The rest of the students would not care much about the assignment and that will reflect on the quality of their work. If a teacher is placed in a culturally diverse classroom, then they should embrace the experience and use the power of being the teacher to spread the knowledge of their student's different cultures as a facilitator.

Having something like culture day would let the students share presentations about themselves and their culture. Experience like this would show the students not to be embarrassed about their culture and that the teacher is interested about their background. Gaining the students trust is important in the teaching process. Just like in any situation, a person will not listen to another if they do not trust them. Culturally responsive teaching is almost a requirement to succeed as a teacher in this day and age.

The United States is the most culturally diverse country in the world. So it should not be a surprise that our classrooms are also the most culturally

diverse in the world. With this comes great responsibility in finding an effective way to teach in these classrooms and unfortunately we are not doing our part. According to the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development in 2009 the United States of America was 33rd in reading, 27th in math, and 22nd in science.

This is unacceptable especially for what is considered by most to be the most powerful country in the world. I believe the lack of educating teachers in how to be a culturally responsive teacher is hindering our student's ability to succeed. If it was requirement to take a couple courses that are specifically on preparing for culturally diverse classrooms then there would be a noticeable change in our nation's educational program. Bibliography Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing Co. Moll, L.

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