

# 4 discussions week 4

Education



Topic Explore Teaching Diverse Initiative: Facilitator’s Guide, Common Belief Tool. Select one of the commonly held beliefs that you identify with the most. Explain why you identify with this belief. Next, click the link and read the information provided. Has your belief changed? Why or why not? Respond to at least two of your classmates’ postings in a thoughtful and substantive manner.

Classmate’s postings #1: Joey

I find it very difficult to identify a single example from the list of commonly held beliefs to address. In many cases, I can identify with and understand the perspective from which the belief was birthed, nurtured and embedded in the educational community mindset, but I also severely disagree and find it to manifest from faulty reasoning, stereotyping, racial/ethnic bias, and even simply , in my opinion, “ lazy” teaching. My perspective is unique to the special education student perspective. As I have addressed previously, though multi-cultural differences exist in these classrooms and certainly do enrich the diverse environment and opportunity for sharing of experiences, the curriculum is often so individualized that immersion activities for the entire class can be sparse. This is certainly not to say that these types of experiences should not be utilized as I believe it would be a disservice to the overall educational experience if diversity were dismissed due to lack of creativity, ingenuity and ability to make such information relatable on the part of the teacher. I do note that, even in the exceptional student classroom, standards and performance are expected of individual learners. No matter what the classroom, their tends to a disturbing trend that caters to the “ need to know” perspective. In the Facilitator’s Guide, common belief 12 states: With all the pressures to raise student achievement, finding and <https://assignbuster.com/4-discussions-week-4/>

using examples for the cultural, historic and everyday lived experiences of my students takes valuable time away from teaching and learning. So in reverse, I identify with this assertion, but do fervently disagree with its overall affect in practice. While compartmentalized learning experiences that facilitate higher test score in standardized, “ high stakes”, testing do impart useful, identified information related to the prediction of future success in specified areas, I believe we miss the “ human” experience by narrowing our perspectives to what have been select as superior information.

Knowledge and learning are comprised of many elements and many highly intelligent individuals find functioning effective in diverse environments and with people from said backgrounds difficult to impossible as their experiences are not relatable to others. Empathy and respect for differing perspectives and ideologies can in fact make individuals stronger in problem solving on a social, ethical and moral plane. While I understand the need to “ build” knowledge from basic to complex in stages, as suggested by common belief 12, I also assert the closing statement related to the concept that achievement is not the same as learning and that if such self-identifiers as race and ethnicity are ignored, self-concept may be diminished as well as the desire to engage in learning experiences of any kind as a result. This perspective would support common belief 7: I believe that I should reward students who try hard, even if they are not doing well in school because building their self-esteem is important. Learners learn at different rates and may have various learning styles and preferences to which we have to accommodate. This is no more evident than in and exceptional student environment. Simply because a learner cannot respond in the most traditional manner, does not suggest that they do not have the capacity or

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meaningful ways.

Southern Poverty potential to do so. I do not “ baby” or make excused for my students, I challenge them to challenge themselves. A little respect and human kindness goes a long way, but coddling will foster mediocrity.

Culturally diverse students may incur language barriers, but we must provide tools and strategies to bridge these gaps. Many of my students are non-verbal, but with patience, keen observation, and the use of assistive technologies, they are able to interact and contribute in

Law Center, Teaching Diverse Students Initiative. (n. d.). Facilitators guide-common belief tool. Retrieved from website: <http://www.tolerance.org/tdsi/sites/tolerance.org>.

[tdsi/files/assets/general/TDSI\\_cbsfacilitators\\_guide.pdf](http://tdsi/files/assets/general/TDSI_cbsfacilitators_guide.pdf)

Respond to Classmate’s posting #1:

Joey;

This is a most well informed response. I found myself in complete agreement with your comments about commonly held belief #12. It is certainly important to build upon previously learned concepts, otherwise known as scaffolding, but mastery is the key. Just learning material does not qualify a student to move onto other areas. They need to internalize various concepts and be able to demonstrate, on their own, that they truly understand that which was learned. This is certainly not an easy to concept to muster, and certainly more difficult for the classroom teacher to monitor. Since our system is predicated on exams, I wonder how we truly know if a student has truly mastered a concept, or if they have simply learned to replicate that which the teacher has already demonstrated.

Classmate’s posting #2: Kristen

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The common belief that I chose is provided in number 1 which states that “ I don’t think of my students in terms of their race and ethnicity, I am color blind when it comes to my teaching.”

I identify myself with this belief because I try my very best in treating students equally. I try to look past their self-beliefs, race, religion, ethnicity and the like. As I have mentioned before, I always see my students as different individuals who have their own personality or backgrounds.

Moreover, my reason behind this belief is that I do not want to discriminate my students. I want to treat them fairly and equally because I always believe that all of them have the right to a quality education. If a teacher discriminates a student or a particular group of students, then he/she is not providing a quality education to the ones he/she is discriminating. Lastly, such attitude hinders the growth of the student’s learning and it may also quench the student’s thirst to learn more through discouragement.

My belief has not change in a most definite manner. Although I am somewhat ‘ color blind’, I know for a fact of the importance of one’s race and ethnicity. Although I do not see students based on the colors of their skin, I still know in my mind that their own culture is a part of their individuality and such must be respected at all times. In fact, I would like or encourage my students to share some of their cultures or even integrate their own beliefs or backgrounds in the class lessons. In this way, not only will my students and I learn about the different cultures but the said student as well will be able to share and promote his or her own background.

Respond to classmate’s #2:

Kristen;

I appreciate your comments about commonly held belief #1. It is, however,  
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difficult to truly be color blind in today's society. Like you, I pride myself on looking past issues of race and color, yet my culture has taught me to be skeptical of people from certain ethnic groups. I despise this part of our heritage, yet it is who we are. While I do not act on my own initial thoughts when I see a person from a certain ethnic group, I am saddened to note that my initial reaction is certainly not that of a colorblind person. Thankfully I quickly realize that I am stronger than many in society in this respect and am truly able to accept all people for who they are as individuals and not on the color of their skin. Thanks for sharing.

#### Topic #2

Theorists warn against the continued use of deficit theories to connect low social-economic standing to failure in school. They have left a lasting mark on schools. Identify a student from a low socio-economic status, either from experience or from the course text, who is not succeeding. How much of that failure is due to forces beyond his or her control and a mismatch between what is being learned at home and what is valued in the classroom? What other contributing factors could be present? How can we effectively teach children despite these contributing factors?

Respond to at least two of your classmates' postings in a thoughtful and substantive manner.

#### Classmate's posting #1: Jennifer

During the summer, my job got the opportunity to run a summer program for the children at a local low-income neighborhood. While working there, I met a little 7 year-old girl who we call by her nickname, "Nana". Nana is very shy, it took a couple days for her to get use to the staff and I. Nana also loved to play the games we ran and adored the color pink. Nana also just

finished kindergarten and still has a hard time speaking out. She usually made a couple sounds and says a few words but she doesn't really talk. With the level her speech development is at and curriculum for kindergarten, I don't think she is doing very well at school. How much of that failure is due to forces beyond Nana's control? A lot! I do believe there is a mismatch at what is being learned at home and what is valued in the classroom. Nana's mom should've taken her to the doctor to see what is wrong, take her to a speech therapist, and even help her out at home with pronouncing words and sentences. Encourage her to use her words. The staff and I encourage Nana to use her words and play activities that involve using your voice, and there was a great difference from when she first came to the last day of summer. Another factor that I think plays a role is coming from a low socioeconomic status family. Nana didn't get the resources that she needs to help her with her speech and her parents probably didn't know how to help her out in the beginning. That is something that is out of Nana's control. With children like Nana, a lot of interaction is needed. Even if they can't say the word or sentence, then provide ways you and the child can understand each other. Body language is just as important as speaking. If we interact with our kids in a positive way, it has a great impact on them. We weren't able to have a full conversation with Nana, but she her vocabulary increased and she made a lot of noise by the end of summer.

Respond to classmate's posting #1:

Jennifer;

This is a great, albeit sad, example of what can happen when a child does not have the adequate educational support to cognitively develop at a normal pace. I think you have identified various strategies that would

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certainly provide effective for Nana moving forward. It is also great to read that you noticed improvement just in the short time you were able to work with her. Do you think that if the strategies you suggest were not continued, Nana would actually regress once the summer was over? I also wonder about adding in strategies to get the family more involved. I know that is difficult if they truly do not care, but I concur with you that a child's development is much more than what can take place in the confines of a school. Thanks for sharing.

Classmate's posting #2: Ketra

Nieto, S. & Bode, P. (2012), writes, " The cultural mismatch theory is more hopeful than deterministic explanations such as genetic inferiority or economic reproduction theories because it assumes that teachers can learn to create environments in which all students can be successful learners" (p 263). Much of that failure is due to forces beyond his or her control and a mismatch between what is being learned at home and what is valued in the classroom. I am reminded of a family of 10 children that were wards of the state. There were 3 sets of twins. The mother was poor and a drug abuser and the children had different fathers. There were 2 girls and 8 boys. Eight of the children remained together and the youngest two were left together. The oldest of the kids was a girl who would assume the mother role for all of the kids at the age of 11 The 8 children were adopted by a great aunt and her husband. They struggled to provide for the kids. All of the kids suffered from behavioral problems, some had ADHD, the children were very angry and would be disruptive and loud in school. They were teased by their peers because they didn't have what other kids their age have. Their aunt would take them to see psychiatrists to help them deal with their emotions and <https://assignbuster.com/4-discussions-week-4/>



what they were exposed to. Because they did not know how to overcome the struggles they endured when they were with their mother, they were considered to be problem children and put out of school most of the time. They all would suffer from uncontrollable rage. At this point the oldest child is 15 years old they were taken away from their mom when she was 8 yrs old. To this day the kids are in behavioral classes, the youngest two are home schooled because they have been thrown out of school repeatedly due to anger, and three of the other kids are enrolled in an alternative school. Other contributing factors could be the effects of drug usage during the pregnancies. The feeling of needing to be loved, and abandonment. It could be distrust of adults because of the way their mother would leave them alone for days. When teachers discipline or raise their voices at them they are reminded of the abuse they suffered. Their Aunt was diagnosed with liver cancer and they are afraid they will be left alone again. They also suffer from guilt because they are together and are separated from their youngest two siblings.

We can affectively teach these children by first understanding their background. If we understand their family dynamics we can approach the children with more sensitivity. Help the children learn to trust teachers. Talk with the Aunt to fully understand how to meet their needs.

Respond to classmate's posting #2:

Ketra;

This is an interesting example you have shared. On the one hand, this family suffers from uncontrollable circumstances that were certainly of no cause of their own. While their behavior for the past 7 years is not proper, it is certainly understandable. At the same time, it appears they have a

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supportive extended family now that is trying to provide for them, but I wonder if the 'damage' has already been done. I also wonder if a broken family as large as theirs (8 children so close in age) is possible to truly care for and provide the services that are sorely needed. The suggestions you give, however, are certainly a start. Thanks for sharing.