Generating Cultural Compatibilities Through Amended Pedagogy & Curriculum: An Excerpt

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July 2016
Abstract

Even though urban classrooms are comprised of students from diverse cultures, there is often a cultural mismatch between the students’ culture, and the pedagogy of the instructor. Such an anomaly often results in a cultural mismatch in the curriculum that is constructed to support students. This discussion is framed with the postulate that in order for critical literacy and achievement to become realized for students of color, then cultural relevance and tolerance for their differences are to be evidenced in the curriculum developed and implemented for their instruction. In addition, this discussion is grounded in the posit that freedom lies within the opening of an inclusive mindset, tools, knowledge, and collective action that will enable one to be who one chooses to be, and not the marginalized self regarded as inferior as compared to those in the dominant culture.

The general interest and willingness to learn is more enhanced for students of color when the curriculum is taught using culturally relevant pedagogical practices. Ladson-Billings regards culturally relevant pedagogy as central to the academic success of African Americans and other children who have not been well served by public schools (1995). When students of diverse populations receive culturally enriching content in their curriculum, not only is learning and academic success attained, but also a positive identity is enriched.

**Themes For A Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

As a researcher, I’ve developed particular themes as a basis for designing culturally relevant curriculum with the intention of promoting student achievement and generating a more refined racial or ethnic identity within the students, as well as what the researcher is defining as culturally relevant academic identity. This term was guided by Zirkel, who posits that
“representations of opportunity are correspondingly encoded in the identities they form in adolescence, and [they] pursue only that which they imagine as possible (2002). The themes are outlined below (Thevenot, 2014):

**Use Culture To Promote Racial, Ethnic, or Academic Identity**

In order for a more equitable climate to exist for the ethnically and linguistically diverse students in the classroom, the curriculum and instructional practices must be examined, and the pedagogy of the instructor must be questioned by herself. This questioning leads to the emergence of critical pedagogy, which will them lead to an amended awareness, enabling her to examine her power in society, in the classroom, and effects such power may have upon the students’ sense of self and their ability to learn.

**Use Culturally Relevant Data To Promote Critical Thinking and Discourse (and Sociopolitical Consciousness)**

In order for critical thinking and discourse to occur, as well as to generate the presence of sociopolitical consciousness, the curriculum must contain accurate information about the events within a sociopolitical context, presented from a multiple perspective, within a combination of front-loading data, questioning strategies, and student-student discourse to examine and reflect upon the main ideas of the content presented.

**Promote Instructional Strategies That Generate Active Learning**

Culturally relevant pedagogy and participatory practices that include the students and their culture when devising strategies to teach will help ensure that not only the students will receive affirmation that their culture is relevant within the school structure, but also they will
receive affirmation that they are included and accepted in the school culture, and are an important central element to their own learning achievement.

Create A More Inclusive Classroom Culture

A heterogeneous cooperative grouping of learners, combined with culturally relevant programming of instruction is required, in order to not only support the ELL and IEP students who may be pulled out for daily specialized instruction, but to create an inclusive community of learners who are supportive of those who miss part of the lesson conducted in a general population classroom.

Use Culturally Relevant Instruction To Promote Student Achievement

Having a focus on culturally relevant instruction for ethnically and linguistically diverse populations is central to the promotion of student achievement. Students will thereby interpret that the inclusion of their culture indicates that they are cared about, thus creating a space by which learning is promoted.
References

