Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

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April 26th 2024

After watching Jeffrey Dessources’s video, I agree that everyone is an educator. Educators are not just employed, credentialed teachers but also people around us, “younger or older, and even those we have never met,” who can teach us valuable lessons. From the most mundane tasks to the exceedingly complicated ones, the ability to discuss why and how something is done makes somebody a teacher, with or without a degree. One might not even need to talk but perform in a manner other people find admirable.

Since everyone can be a teacher, it is equally true that we are also students. This ability sometimes depends on humbling ourselves to our surroundings and the people near us. By remaining receptive, we may learn infinite wisdom about the human condition from anyone, no matter their credentials. One should not allow the existing hierarchies to blind us from important lessons.

Culturally responsive teaching not only means affirming the students in their own cultural connections but also building a bridge by connecting what the students are learning to their own lives and making them feel a sense of belonging. Teachers should have high expectations of their students’ academic achievements and have faith in their abilities. Tailoring the curriculum to be culturally inclusive of all students is a meaningful and accessible instructional approach. Jeremy Deem asserts that teachers who create physically and culturally inviting learning environments will motivate the students. “Multicultural images on the walls, the textures and colors, the sounds and other sensory inputs communicate to students and parents that ‘this place belongs to us.’” Thus, culturally responsive teaching becomes a powerful tool that benefits both teachers and students, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic learning environment where everyone can thrive.

In conclusion, an excellent student must be a good educator. As teachers, we must not allow ourselves to believe that education is a one-way street. Cultivating a culturally responsive classroom means allowing ourselves to embrace the speed at which the world around our students and ourselves is changing. Teachers must not be left behind in the cultural, technological, and political contexts in which students live. Ignoring these issues will not only hinder our ability to develop strong relationships with our students but significantly harm the ability of our students to survive in the ever-changing world. Teachers must listen to the needs of their students because they will let us know what is relevant to the world that defines them. Ignoring such realities renders teachers to be ineffective.

**4- What are some of the personal steps you could take to move further to the right along the continuum in your own journey to better understand your personal development toward cultural proficiency?**

I believe I have moved further toward the right on the cultural proficiency continuum in the US culture. It was a bit of a struggle for me as a university student as I was sometimes misunderstood for being too straightforward in dealing with people. In my culture, it is acceptable to use “I want” instead of “would like.” I always felt that when I used my own way of communicating, a few Americans thought I was overly aggressive. I wish people would have understood me better and known my good intentions. Therefore, I would not like my students to be treated the same way. Teachers must be patient, understanding, and culturally sensitive to their students’ needs. I should not take it personally if the actions or humor of someone from a different culture offend me. It happened in the past, but I realized it was harmless humor as I learned more about the student’s culture and personality. I also realized that non-verbal communication can be meaningful and sometimes deliver a message different from the one said in words.

References

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