The Significance of Cultural Competence & Culturally Responsive Practices in the School Setting

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Overview

Participants will:

- acknowledge the significance of culture in society
- recognize the importance of cultural competence
- have an awareness of one’s own cultural context as well as similarities and differences with students
- understand how one’s own cultural awareness contributes to student’s learning and environment
- know some steps to use to assess the school setting, classrooms and personal practices
Welcome and Introduction

- Each person is a member of many cultures and each has implications for the educational process.
  - Codes of behavior, values, and norms, beliefs, customs, communications or “the way we do things here”. Art, music, food, literature, and clothing are all visible aspects of culture.

  Schools have culture
  Ethnic groups have cultures
  Businesses have cultures
  Neighborhoods have cultures.

  It is dynamic and changes over time.

  There is diversity within cultures.

- CULTURE- Learned traditions, principles and guides of behavior that are shared among members of a particular group.
WHY CULTURAL COMPETENCE MATTERS!

- Students are more diverse than ever.
- Minority students have grown in all regions of the country.
- Culture plays a critical role in learning.
- Cultural competence leads to more effective teaching.
- Culturally competent educators are better equipped to reach out to students and families.
- Cultural competence helps address student achievement gaps.
- Cultural competence helps educators meet accountability requirements.
Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development

Ecological systems theory considers a child's development within the context of the systems of relationship that form his or her environment.

At the core of Bronfenbnerner’s ecological model is the child’s biological and psychological makeup, based on individual and genetic developmental history. This makeup continues to be affected and modified by the child’s immediate physical and social environment (microsystem) as well as interactions among the systems within the environment (mesosystems).

Other broader social, political and economic conditions (exosystem) influence the structure and availability of microsystems and the manner in which they affect the child.

Finally, social, political, and economic conditions are themselves influenced by the general beliefs and attitudes (macrosystems) shared by members of the society. (Bukatko & Daehler, 1998)
The Diversity Wheel

- Harassment
- Stereotypes
- Standard of Living
- Citizenship
- Integration
- Life events
- Type of Education
- First Language
- Income
- Participation Voice and influence
- Culture/heritage
- Environment
- Community status
- Gender
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion & Belief
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Number of Children
- Role in Family
- Skills
- Caring Responsibilities
- Role/Responsibility/Position in work
- Entitlement to public funds

Discrimination

Factors that make society unequal

Adapted from: Loden, M (1996) Implementing Diversity (Irwin Professional Publishing) and from the ten definitions of diversity given in the Equalities Review.
Diversity Wheel:

The center of the wheel represents internal dimensions that are usually most permanent or visible. The outside of the wheel represents dimensions that are acquired and change over the course of a lifetime. The combinations of all of these dimensions influence our values, beliefs, behaviors, experiences and expectations and make us all unique as individuals.
The Iceberg Concept of Culture

Like an iceberg, nine-tenths of culture is below the surface.

Surface Culture
Most easily seen
Emotional level - low
Food, dress, music, visual arts, drama, crafts, dance, literature, languagae, celebrations, games

Shallow Culture
Unspoken Rules
Emotional level - high
courtesy, contextual conversational patterns, concept of time, personal space, rules of conduct, facial expressions, nonverbal communication, body language, touching, eye contact, patterns of handling emotions, notions of modesty, concept of beauty, courtship practices, relationships to animals, notions of leadership, tempo of work, concepts of food, ideals of child rearing, theory of disease, social interaction rate, nature of friendships, tone of voice, attitudes toward elders, concept of cleanliness, notions of adolescence, patterns of group decision-making, definition of insanity, preferences for competition or cooperation, tolerance of physical pain, concept of "self", concept of past and future, definition of obscenity, attitudes toward dependents, problem solving roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and ...
Definition of Terms

• Cultural Proficiency – knowing how to learn and teach about different groups in ways that acknowledge and honor all people and the groups they represent.

• Ethnicity – groups in which members share a cultural heritage from one generation to another; one’s geographical origin, group image and a sense of identity derived from contemporary cultural patterns and a sense of history. Many people are of multiple ethnicities.
• **Cultural Responsivity** – a developmental process; the ability to learn from and relate respectfully to people of your own culture as well as those from other cultures. It includes adjusting your own and your organization’s behaviors based on what you learn.

• **Multiculturalism** - a world view that recognizes and values the uniqueness of diverse learners, cultural backgrounds, and identities. It is systemic, occurring across educational and learning environments.
• **Cultural Competency**

  It is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practice and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of service, thereby producing better outcomes.

  In the educational setting, it involves the ability to acquire knowledge of education-related beliefs, attitudes and practices to improve student achievement.

  It is a developmental process occurring along a continuum.
Cultural Competency Continuum

- Cultural Destructiveness
- Cultural Blindness
- Cultural Incapacity
- Cultural Pre-Competence
- Cultural Competence
- Cultural Proficiency

Cross T., Bazron, B., Dennis, K., & Isaacs M. (1989). Towards a culturally competent system of care, volume I. Georgetown University Child Development Center, CASSP Technical Assistance Center
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Destructiveness</th>
<th>Refusal to acknowledge the presence or importance of cultural differences; Differences are punished and suppressed; Schools endorse the myth of universality.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Incapacity</td>
<td>The individual or organization chooses to ignore cultural differences; No attention is devoted to supporting cultural differences; Emphasis may be on the cognitive growth and maturity of youngsters versus addressing the issues of cultural awareness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Blindness</td>
<td>Individuals and organizations believe that cultural differences are of little importance; People are viewed through a western cultural mainstream lens; Messages are communicated to students that their culture is of little consequence to the learning experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Pre-Competence</td>
<td>The individual or organization recognizes and responds to cultural differences; There is an open acknowledgement of the need for cultural competence; Educators may seek out new information regarding diversity by attending training sessions or interacting with those individuals who have insider cultural information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
<td>The individual and organization value and appreciate cultural differences; Exploration of issues related to equity, cultural history, knowledge, and social justice; Students’ cultural experiences are valued and integrated into the learning process.</td>
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Cultural Competence – A Key Competence of the 21st Century

- Working effectively with individuals from diverse groups and those with opposing viewpoints are critical skills for employees today.

- People have diverse attitudes, ideas, thought processes and more.

- As students learn to collaborate with others, they build skills such as listening to other perspectives, integrating a variety of ideas, and gaining insight into others’ thought processes and ways of problem solving.
What is Culturally Responsive Practice?

• Culturally responsive practices are specific educational practices, instructional strategies, team processes, and curricula content which have been established by research to increase the achievement of culturally diverse students.

• We are culturally responsive when we adjust how we teach to the needs and experiences of our students.

• Align with research on effective instructional practices.
Intercultural Development Continuum

Monocultural Mindset

Denial

Polarization

Minimization

Acceptance

Adaptation

Intercultural Mindset
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ethnocentric</th>
<th>Ethnorelative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My cultural experience is the only one that is real and valid. There is little to no thought of “other.”</td>
<td>“We” are superior and “they” are inferior. One feels threatened and is highly critical. What is strange may be labeled as stupid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Principles

- There is no checklist of behaviors or beliefs that describes a particular culture.
- Every individual should be understood from his/her unique frame of reference.
- All individuals are a dynamic blend of multiple roles and identified cultural groups.
Cultural responsivity is having the capacity to function effectively in cultural contexts that differ from your own.

The world in general contains much cultural, ethnic and religious diversity.

Developing the ability to be culturally responsive is a life-long journey that is both enriching and rewarding.
Culturally sensitive instruction and behaviors are complex and multidimensional concepts that are applicable to all courses, students, and educators.

One dimension is the extent to which teachers use examples, data, and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate important concepts, rules, and procedures in their subject areas or discipline.

An example would be using biographies of African-American scientists or inventions by African-American inventors in science and biology classes.
Pederson’s Developmental Model

- Awareness - of one’s own attitudes and biases as well as the sociopolitical issues that confront culturally different students

- Knowledge – accumulation of factual information about different cultural groups

- Skills – integration of awareness competencies to positively impact children from culturally distinct groups

- Attitude – believes that differences are valuable, change is necessary and positive.

- Each domain builds successively on the previous one such that mastery of an earlier domain is necessary before proceeding to subsequent domains.
Awareness & Attitude

- Willingness to sustain the positive aspects of one’s own culture, and to be constructively critical when appropriate
- Willingness to learn from different traditions, cultures, identities
- Willingness to challenge instances of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination
- Willingness to accept reasonable and equitable procedures for resolving conflicts
• Believes that differences are valuable and that learning about others who are culturally different is necessary and rewarding.

• Is open to change, and believes that change is necessary and positive.

• Willing to self-examine and, when necessary, challenge and change their own values, worldview, assumptions and biases.
• Accurately assess one’s own multicultural skills, comfort level, growth, and development.

• Use verbal and non-verbal (body language) responses to communicate with diverse individuals and/or groups.

• Resolve conflicts in culturally appropriate manner.

• Use multiple viewpoints in problem-solving.

• Employ critical thinking skills.
- Is personally committed to justice, social change and combating oppression.

- Accepts other worldviews and perspectives and be willing to acknowledge that, as individuals, they do not have all the answers.

- Believes that cultural differences do not have to interfere with effective communication or meaningful relationships.
Knowledge

- Knowledge and Understanding of one’s own cultural traditions and the ways in which these both foster and constrain one’s own personal identity.

- Knowledge of the physical, social, and psychological needs which human beings have in common, including nutrition and shelter and values relating to freedom, self-respect, belonging, and a sense of meaning and purpose.

- Knowledge of the various ways in which different cultures, communities and societies respond to these fundamental needs and moral concerns.
• Understands other worldviews and perspectives.

• Understands how social change occurs.

• Is familiar with the nature of institutional oppression and power.

• Understands that there are unjust institutional barriers that exist for diverse groups.
• Demonstrates a realization and understanding of internalized oppression and its impact on identity and self-esteem.

• Understands how class, gender, race, etc. affect individuals and their experiences.

• Understands the ways that cultural differences affect verbal and nonverbal communication and the notion of personal space.
Skills

- Ability to contribute to the development of mainstream public, cultural and political life and to the affairs of one’s own community

- Ability to learn from different cultural experiences, norms and perspectives, and to empathize with people with different traditions

- Ability to analyze and criticize features of cultural traditions, and to identify instances of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination

- Ability to engage in discussion, argument and negotiation.
• Ability to identify and openly discuss cultural differences and issues.

• Ability to gain respect of individuals who are culturally different themselves.

• Ability to challenge oppressive systems and serve as an ally to those being oppressed.

• Ability to use cultural knowledge and sensitivity to defend the rights and values of individuals and groups.
Areas for Reflection

Administrators can reflect seriously in three important areas:

1. understanding and employing the “null” or hidden curriculum effectively;

2. Creating supportive and welcoming classroom climates;

3. Infusing all instruction with a multidimensional, multicultural component
The “Null” Curriculum

- The “null” curriculum is defined as the hidden, implicit curriculum, embedded in the culture of the classroom and the university. This hidden curriculum serves to socialize students to particular norms and values. Before-and after-class time affords excellent opportunities for capitalizing on the null curriculum.

- Understanding and utilizing this concept is significant in the school success of African-Americans students. The null curriculum (what schools do not teach explicitly) has important effects on the successes and failures of all students.
Null curriculum continued

• Rules, procedures, behaviors, interactions with students, interactions with all adults, and the taken-for-granted classroom and school processes can be critically examined to ascertain the impact on the null curriculum.

• All should be examined to see if they support diversity in the classroom.
Five essential elements contribute to a system’s ability to become more culturally competent

1. Valuing diversity
2. The capacity for cultural self-assessment
3. Consciousness of the “dynamics” inherent when cultures interact
4. Institutionalization of cultural knowledge
5. Developing adaptations to service delivery reflecting and understanding between and within cultures.

These five elements must be manifested in every level of the service delivery system as reflected in attitudes, policies, practices, procedures, structures, and services.
Levels of Influence in the Social Ecological Model

- **Individual**
  - Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs

- **Interpersonal**
  - Family, Peers, Social Networks, Associations

- **Community**
  - Social Networks, Norms, Standards

- **Institutions**
  - Rules, Regulations, Policies & Informal Structures

- **Structures, Policies, Systems**
  - Local, State, Federal Policies and Laws to Regulate / Support Healthy Actions
Building a Culturally Competent School

Three specific areas that must be addressed to ensure that a school is culturally responsive:

- Organization of the school
- School policies and procedures
- Community involvement.
Organization of the School

The organization of the school:
- includes the administrative structure and the way it relates to diversity.

The principal might consider such details as:
- the assignment of classrooms, the hours
- the building is open, whether the
- building and the staff are accessible,
- and whether the building’s physical
- appearance is respectful of different
The organization of the school

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The principal might consider such details as
- the assignment of classrooms,
- the hours the building is open,
- whether the building and the staff are accessible,
- whether the building’s physical appearance is respectful of different cultural groups.
School policies and procedures

Practices that affect the delivery of services to students from diverse backgrounds

- Principals must ask questions about their school’s special education referral rates and identification procedures and access to honors and AP classes.

- Principals must also examine which students get instruction from the most experienced teachers and how school resources are allocated.
Community involvement

- Conduct neighborhood and community outreach efforts
- Assess the outcomes of these initiatives.

For example, include hiring parent liaisons and/or a staff member who speaks the language of a student group and who understands their cultural background, as well as cultural brokers to facilitate communication with diverse community groups.
How to Become Culturally Responsive

- Develop cultural self-awareness
- Appreciate the value of diverse views
- Avoid imposing your own values on others
- Use cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes
Becoming Culturally Responsive

• Incorporate relatable aspects of students’ daily lives into the curriculum (such as jargon or slang, prior knowledge and extracurricular interests such as music and sports)

• Recognize and acknowledge the cultural characteristics of students that are strengths in the educational environment

• Avoid generalizations of the student’s cultural background and heritage
Becoming Culturally Responsive

- Challenge the thinking of each student
- Communicate high expectations for all students
- Rules and expectations clearly stated, posted, taught and uniformly reinforced.
Early intervention and assessment

- Use a team problem-solving model to address student achievement or behavior problems and provide early intervention support
- Match students with appropriate mentors or life coaches from similar cultural backgrounds
- Include ESL teachers and other staff members who have a background in cultural differences and second language acquisition issues on the general education problem-solving team
- Use assessments that are unbiased, culturally sensitive, and advocacy-oriented
- Use outcome-based data for decision making and planning.
Valuing Culture and Ethnicity

“People’s religion, culture, and ethnicity often are not just facts about them, but are central to their self-definitions. People are not just persons who happen to be Christians, women, or African Americans. These characteristics are not possessions, like clothing, that can be shed or changed at will. Instead, people are Christians, women, or African Americans.

If so, then one reason that can be given for respecting diversity is that to fail to do so is to reject who people are. It is to deny their worth. It does an especially insidious kind of violence to them.”

(Strike, Haller & Soltis, 2005).
Make a concerted effort to learn about your students’ individual cultures and interests: languages, sports, music, history, challenges etc.

Use surveys and questionnaires to learn about some of their interests and dreams.

Make time to talk with each of your students.
Relationships Matter

- Encourage students to share information about themselves (hobbies, dreams, favorite book)

- Share information about you as a person, not just as a teacher

- Promote conversations about differences and celebrate diversity

- Show that you care!
Relationships Matter

• Find ways to affirm and encourage students daily

• Promote positive perspectives on parents and families of culturally and linguistically diverse students

• Provide mentoring and relationship building programs and activities
Relationships Matter

- Get to know key community resources and programs
- Enforce consistent and equitable practices for all students
- Find ways to celebrate individual and group student success
Culturally Responsive Practices

- Provide services that acknowledge that culture is central to learning and encouraging students and others to learn by building on the experiences, knowledge, and skills they bring to the classroom, group, or school setting.

- Teachers and school staff who are aware and respectful of the importance of the values, beliefs, traditions, customs, and students and families they serve.

- Educators and other staff who are also aware of the impact of their own culture on their interactions with others and take all of these factors into account when planning and delivering instruction and services to students and their community.
Strategies to Consider

- Elective courses designed to help students from diverse backgrounds get along, such as Combating Intolerance
- Peer mediation to allow students from diverse backgrounds an opportunity to talk about potentially divisive issues
- Student clubs that help large groups of students retain cultural identity (e.g., Muslim Student Society)
- Openness to starting new clubs to reflect the interests of the student body
- Parent liaisons who are paid to work with families who would not otherwise have a traditional involvement with the school
- Home visits by parent liaisons
- Telephone tree in multiple languages
- Minority parent committee that organizes evenings for minority parents to come to school in smaller groups and learn about the college admissions process, SAT prep classes, scholarship and grant opportunities, and so forth
Letters sent home and phone contact with parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to ensure a good turnout at parent meetings

Open communication with students

Quarterly meetings between a randomly selected group of students from each grade level and their administrator to obtain feedback on how school is going for them and what specific things can be improved or changed

Effort awards honor breakfast for students who have had trouble but who have raised their grades; each teacher nominates two students from his or her class

Establishment of a Hispanic PTSA with business discussion and programs in Spanish

Initiation of a “challenge” program to invite promising students to enroll in honors and Advanced Placement classes.
The Provision of Culturally Competent Services in the School Setting

At the Policymaking Level - Culturally competent policymakers:

- Appoint board members from the community so that voices from all groups of people within the community participate in decisions
- Actively recruit multiethnic and multiracial staff
- Provide ongoing staff training and support developing cultural competency
- Develop, mandate, and promote standards for culturally competent services
- Insist on evidence of cultural competency when contracting for services
The Provision of Culturally Competent Services in the School Setting

- nurture and support new community-based multicultural programs
- engage in or support research on cultural competency
- support the inclusion of cultural competence across all systems reflected in policies, practices and procedures
- support the development of culturally appropriate interview guides and selection processes for faculty and staff
At the Administrative Level

**Culturally competent administrators:**

- Include cultural competency requirements in staff job descriptions and discuss the importance of cultural awareness and competency with potential employees.

- Ensure that all staff participate in regular, in-service cultural competency training.

- Promote programs that respect and incorporate cultural differences.

- Consider whether the school’s physical plant, hours, and staffing are accessible and whether its physical appearance is respectful of different cultural groups.
Cultural Competence Checklist for Success

- Make the setting and environment more welcoming and attractive based on the community’s cultural mores.

- Avoid stereotyping and misapplication of scientific knowledge.

- Include community input at the planning and development stage of projects.

- Use educational approaches and materials that will capture the attention of your intended audience.

- Find ways to partner with the community.
Understand there is no recipe.

Hire staff that reflect the client population.

Understand cultural competency is continually evolving.

Be creative in finding ways to communicate with population groups that have limited English-speaking proficiency.
Culturally Responsive Instruction

- Do your students see themselves and their experiences in the curriculum?
- Inclusive content covered in the curriculum, reflecting the diversity of society
- Look at the cultural make-up of your course’s content (socioeconomics, race, religion, gender, political leaning, etc.)
- Teach in ways students can understand.
Culturally Responsive Instruction

- Use student-centered stories, vocabulary and examples
- Incorporate relatable aspects of students’ lives
- Create a reading list that embraces representation of cultural diversity
- Provide a variety of materials (written, oral, visual) for access to the curriculum
Culturally Responsive Instruction

• Have a clear academic focus and clearly specify learning goals.

• Augment instruction with intensive enrichment periods.

• Provide for high rates of overt responding.

• Use peer tutoring to practice critical basic skills.
Culturally Responsive Instruction

- Teach for fluency or automaticity. (Lessons presented at a brisk pace will enable students to respond at high rates to the teacher’s instruction, resulting in higher academic achievement).

- Teach for accuracy and constantly monitor student performance.

- Promote higher order thinking.
1. Is my classroom climate warm and supportive for diverse learner students who do not participate in class discussions and who are consistently failing my exams?
2. Is my classroom inviting for all students?
3. Is there a significant emphasis on cooperative activities as opposed to competitive activities?
4. Is my teaching style supportive of the learning styles of culturally diverse students?
How does behavior vary across cultures?

What are culturally specific traits that one might use as a guideline for observation and understanding?

Consider:
Communication Style
Response Style
Processing Style
Examples of Cultural Patterns of Behavior

- Communication Style
  - Frankness of manner
  - Expressive
- Response Style
  - Back channeling
  - Eye contact
- Processing Style
  - Personal cues
  - Top Down
- Social Interaction Style
  - Cooperative
  - Social Distance
Integration of Cultural Knowledge

- The knowledge developed regarding culture and cultural dynamics, must be integrated into every facet of a school, program or agency. Staff must be trained, and effectively utilize the knowledge gained.

- Administrators should develop policies that are responsive to cultural diversity. Program materials should reflect positive images of all people, and be valid for use with each group. Fully integrated cultural knowledge may acknowledge global changes in educational practices.
For example, educational institutions and accreditation bodies might develop cultural competence standards to ensure teacher and administrator preparation. Then these same professionals collaborate with communities to develop school policies that reinforce culturally familiar values to improve outcomes for students.

Institutionalized cultural knowledge can enhance an organization’s capacity.

The goal is to see cultural proficiency as a way to understand, embrace, and talk about differences that recognizes and respects individuals and their cultures.
“Cultural and linguistic competence is a life’s journey not a destination”!
REFERENCES


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