

# Culturally Responsive Teaching

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# The Problem

## (Abstract)

- Barely three-quarters of high school students are graduating from high school in California (USA)
- THE NEED: Culturally Responsive Teaching! Foster a development of heightened cultural awareness!
- Intent: Infuse cultural awareness in into the state curriculum as well as leaders in education recognize a culture that often remains silent: the culture of the learning disabled student!

# Alarming Statistics

- 62% of students in the U.S. are unemployed one year out of school.
- 60% of adolescents in treatment for substance abuse and 50% with diagnosed depression have learning disorders
- 31% of adolescents with learning disorders will be arrested 3-5 years out of high school.
- ½ of all “juvenile delinquents” tested were found to have learning disabilities (Karpman, 2002, p. 2)

# National University (USA)

- National University (California, Hawaii, and Nevada) graduated more minority students and over 50% of all teachers in California (Gibson, 2007)
- National University upholds Culturally Responsive teaching via Level 1 and Level 2 tiers for educators entering special education that infuse heightened cultural awareness into each syllabus
- California (state) initiated a grant with National University to oversee ALL special education interns teaching in inner city schools to maintain state standards

## **National University**

Administrative Office is located at 11255 North Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla, California (USA).

International Headquarters is at 5245 Pacific Concourse Drive, Los Angeles, California (USA) headed by Richard Higginbottom: phone is 310-662-2151.



# Action Plan for Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Teacher Education Intern Program
- Rigorous entrance requirements
- ALL University Level classes MUST include a cultural component!
- Teacher Candidates:
- Evaluation of teacher candidates must reflect compliance with State Teaching Standards which includes designing instruction for diverse learners!

# Supporting Culturally Responsive Teachers

- Leadership Skills:
  - Trust
  - Team Building
  - Similarities/Differences
  - Recognize Strengths of the Individual
  - Fairness

# What makes a Leader? What makes a Manager?

(Bennis, 1997, p.4)

- Leader
  - Effectiveness
  - What/Why
  - Trust: Human Element
  - Innovating: Initiation
  - Big Picture
- Manager
  - Efficiency
  - How
  - Systems, controls,
  - Procedures, policy
  - Copying status quo
  - Bottom Line

# Gardeners (1995) Leadership Elements

- “Leaders are people who understand the prevailing culture, even though much of the culture is latent, existing only in people’s minds and dreams, or in their unconscious...”
- The leaders of the future will be those who take the next step – to change the culture” (p.190).
- We must be “change agents to affect culturally responsive teaching!

# Synchronicity in Leadership

## (Jaworski, 1998, pgs ix-x)

- “A meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than probability of chance is evolved..the most subtle territory of leadership...occur[s] collectively within a group or team of people”.
- Synchronicity provides us the opportunity, as leaders, to shape the future, to become change agents and accept culturally responsive teaching as an offering to our diverse students!

# Theoretical Framework

- Trifold method of communication
  - Benefit: allows an “expert”, i.e. multicultural leader to act as a “go-between” the target (student at risk) and the educator/leader who often brainstorms with the consultant to find the best possible manner to incorporate culturally responsive teaching (Thomas, et.al, 2000).
  - Also known as the Triadic Model of Communication (ibid).

# Constructivist Teaching

- A “hands-on” approach to teaching.
- Incorporates KWL – what does the student KNOW, what does the student WANT to know and at the end of the lesson, what has the student LEARNED!
- “To understand constructivism educators must focus attention on the learner” (Brooks, 1999)
- Engage the learner: teach to the modalities!

# Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

- Scaffolding information so that students at risk, i.e. learning disabled students can grasp new information that has been segmented.
- Students grasp new information by building on prior knowledge.
- Often younger children are assisted by older children and adults (Cole, 1996)

# SDAIE STRATEGIES

- Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English
  - Widely used by educational leaders to make learning more concrete for students whose primary language is other than English
  - Makes use of ALL learning modalities: kinesthetic, auditor and visual
  - Minimize use of English but emphasize learning based on student's past knowledge

# Strengthening Leadership in Culturally Responsive Teaching

## **LEADERSHIP IS BUILT ON:**

- Trust
- Team Building
- Awareness of similarities and differences
- Recognizing each other's strengths

## **GROUP PARTICIPATION;**

- Increased self-awareness toward heightened cultural diversity
- Consolidation of previous knowledge about cultural diversity
- Role of culture in human interactions

# CONCLUSION

- Statistics point to increased need for culturally responsive teaching!
- Acknowledgement of students at risk and those qualifying for special education under specific learning disability is given for their successes rather than failures!
- Leaders in education can foster culturally responsive teaching by following aforementioned theories and strategies to enhance education for ALL students, nationally and internationally!

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