

TEACHING IN THE MARGINS

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Culture is Central to Learning

Culture is a powerful variable which plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals
Culture is at the heart of all we do in the name of education.

“There are differences among cultures in the ways in which parents teach children at home, the ways in which parents expect children to behave, and the ways in which children and adults converse and interact. When teachers do not share their students cultural background, the teaching-learning process may be impeded by misunderstanding and frustration.” Beverly McLeod in *Educating All Our Students: Improving Education for Children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds*
<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/nrcrdsll/edall.htm>

“Young children in particular know how to behave in their community and at home, but they experience frustration in settings that do not share the same norms” Bobby Hobgood in *Learn North Carolina* November 2001

“The idea that children bring a great deal with them to the learning experience, that what they bring may differ depending on their cultural and linguistic background, that children learn by selectively paying attention to information and using it to construct knowledge, and that they do all of this in a social context, has led educators to new expectations about the capabilities of students, and new ways of designing and delivering curriculum.”
McLeod

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT): 5 Essential Elements

1. Developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity
2. Including ethnic and culturally diverse content in the curriculum
3. Demonstrating caring and building a learning community
4. Cross cultural communications
5. Cultural congruity in classroom instruction

-Geneva Gay (2000)

What does being an effective CRT depend on?

KNOWLEDGE, SENSITIVITY, PERSONAL COMFORT, MINDSET

BEING AN EFFECTIVE CRT DOES NOT DEPEND ON YOUR ETHNICITY!!!!

“Curriculum and pedagogical practice that is not culturally relevant tends to ignore or misrepresent the contribution and worth of people from subordinate or marginalized groups, while falsely inflating the contribution and worth of people from dominant or centralized groups. It is important for educators to use curriculum and teaching strategies that reflect the needs and interests of all children and to present the world as truthfully and completely as they can. It is also essential that educators understand how the social cultural context of the school and the learners mediate learning and teaching.”

-Barbara Beyerbach SUNY Oswego syllabus for CRT EDU 380

“Educators who are members of the dominant culture and who occupy a position of power, despite their attempts to appreciate and understand all of their students, often lack the insight into their students' value systems and cultures that would enable them to teach those students effectively.”

-Gloria Ladson-Billings, Teaching in Dangerous Times *in The Journal of Negro Education*, 67(3), 255-267

LANGUAGE

“Fostering cultural competence also requires teachers to support students' home language/dialect while simultaneously teaching them Standard English. That is, rather than chastise students for using the language/dialect they use when speaking with family and friends and in their communities, effective teachers help students understand when and where code-switching, or the alternate use of Standard English and home language/dialect in formal and informal settings, is preferable or necessary.” Gloria Ladson-Billings, “Teaching in Dangerous Times” in *The Journal of Negro Education*, 67(3), 255-267

Rosemary's Advice to Teachers of Children in the Margins

- Attend as many multicultural events as you can.
- Read and take workshops, courses on music from other cultures.
- Talk to people of other cultures whenever you can.
- Travel as much as possible
- Teach with a world map close at hand
- Take dance lessons
- Ask yourself if you are passionate about your teaching
- Ask yourself if you believe that all students have something to give
- Ask yourself if you are willing to work harder than you ever have to help these students reach their potential
- “Give and you shall receive”—As a CRT, you must give 150% of your time, energy and your heart, but the rewards of seeing a child grow to his/her potential is like a gardener watching a flower bloom. It gives validity to your life and unequalled joy.

Some Characteristics of a Successful Urban Teacher

List by Alice Pratt – found in AOSA 2007 Conference Binder

FINAL THOUGHTS ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

It is like hiking up a mountain in that there is an uphill struggle all the way to the top, but when you get there, the vista is so breathtaking that you cannot wait for the next adventure.

Alice Pratt

Being a CRT is difficult but very rewarding. Getting past the first year of teaching is the hardest part. Once one gets to know the students, love them and appreciate them for what they can be, the “job” becomes a calling and the successes exhilarating.

Rose Grellis

Being a CRT in an urban setting means being passionate, caring and dedicated. It means doing whatever it takes to reach the students.

Rosemary Eichenlaub

Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you will help them become what they are capable of becoming.

Goethe

The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind.

Kahlil Gibran

Quote from an Intern Teacher of Rose Grellis:

I have lived between two worlds all of my life, and have never really felt fully a part of either. My students in Miami couldn't decide if I was African-American, Haitian, or Hispanic, because I didn't fit the stereotypes they were familiar with. All it takes is an open mind and your eyes and ears and heart will teach you what you need to know. If you assume that people are "different," they will be. If you believe that human beings all have the same hopes and fears, and that everyone has the right to the same happiness you wish for yourself then you will be able to connect to other human beings no matter where on the globe they come from.

*******This session based on this research article:**

Robinson, Kathy. 2006. White Teacher, Students of Color: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Elementary General Music in Communities of Color. In C. Frierson-Campbell (Ed.), Teaching Music in the Urban Classroom, Vol. 1: A Guide to Survival, Success, and Reform. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.