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Culturally Responsive Teaching

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Kimberly Shorey
Honors Thesis Narrative
Culturally Responsive Teaching

Through the analysis of prior studies that encompass culturally responsive teaching, the role of culturally responsive teaching in a classroom was examined as to how it is executed in the classroom for students' overall growth and development. Examining each of the academic domains (reading, math, science, and social studies), allowed for comprehension and understanding of the significant role and benefits culturally responsive teaching has in the classroom. Themes were identified throughout the study as commonalities between studies arose. Themes as: drawing on prior connections, representation, cultural concepts, white-centric education (teacher pedagogy), the lack of translation in cultural aspects, and inclusion of all ethnicities and races. From a young age, students have innocent thoughts and opinions that have not been altered by society. Therefore, addressing and educating students on all cultures, ethnicities, and races at a younger age allows students to develop cultural competence. As evident from this study when a student is able to find connections between their prior knowledge and experience in their academic work they will be able to feel connected to the work, promoting engagement. Inside the classroom teachers can implement culturally responsive teaching across all domains, but before a teacher can teach it is immensely important that teachers educate themselves first to meet the needs of all students and respect the culture of all their students.

Culturally responsive teaching looks different across all domains, explicitly it can be seen in reading and social studies. In these domains, culture can be discussed and talked about while still involving the content. As evidenced by this study when a child is able to build on prior knowledge while being introduced to a new topic they can make connections. With the diversity in classrooms today it is crucial to address and teach all, including minorities and marginalized communities. By educating young students about the full world around them they can see and understand different opinions, perspectives, and lives of others. These connections allow an easier gateway to learning with understanding aspects of new material. Having students draw on personal experiences in the classroom prompts conversation but this conversation cannot be held without a safe learning environment. Leading to the importance of representation of all ethnicities, cultures, and races. By being aware of different student cultures in the classroom, teachers can build a curriculum around connections that can be made by all students to different cultures with equal representation promoting inclusion.

Culturally responsive teaching does not always have to be explicitly stated, representation can be integrated across all domains. As evidenced by this study, culturally responsive teaching can also be used as manipulative in lessons. A teacher can add culturally relevant pictures or scenarios rather than traditional and generic manipulatives. Students from diverse backgrounds, particularly black students along with other racial minorities, are underrepresented and poorly served within the scientific community. As teachers, we can break this cycle by promoting and incorporating culturally inclusive methods as we present subject content.

Cultural diversity lets us appreciate our differences. Different cultural groups have varying beliefs, customs, values, and a wide variety of characteristics that make them special. As teachers, it is immensely important to educate students on cultures as they shape the world around us. Cultural influences make people see the world differently and cultural diversity should be appreciated. Having conversations, and addressing differences inside the classroom benefits a student both inside and outside of the classroom. In the classroom teachers need to integrate cultural diversity into the content, efficiently teaching the subject matter material while developing students' cultural competence.

Different strategies can allow educators to effectively and confidently practice culturally responsive teaching within their classroom to enhance the developmental and academic domains of their students to foster a rich environment for learning and growing.

When teaching reading in the classroom a teacher needs to be prepared. A teacher should have an array of children's diverse books. Representation of all cultures, races, and ethnicities gives students a chance to feel connected to the book, and to learn more about themselves. These connections are pivotal in the development of cultural awareness. Along with connections, teachers can prompt discussion between students. These conversations give students a chance to learn more about themselves and others. Another way for students to become more culturally aware is through reading about cultures. Traditional and generic children's books although helpful, show an underrepresentation of minorities. When books in the classroom show equal representation it gives students the tools they need to become more culturally diverse, learning about other cultures through literature.

When teaching mathematics, teachers are able to manipulate lessons with a cultural lens to activate the prior knowledge the student brings with them into the classroom. When teachers create connections between students' prior knowledge to new material, it is a way to counterattack any math-rooted anxiety in students. This can be done by integrating cultural aspects into math concepts. For example, instead of using a generic manipulative a teacher can replace that manipulative with an artifact from a culture, promoting conversation and a discussion about this artifact. Even though the student is only using it as a manipulative it introduces a new aspect of culture but does not change the lesson. In mathematics, culturally responsive teaching is implemented but does not have to be explicitly stated.

Making science a relatable feature in the lives of culturally diverse students involves integrating culturally relevant elements into daily instruction. In the classroom teachers can implement culturally responsive techniques non-explicitly just as in mathematics but teachers also have the opportunity to address the representation of minorities and people of color in the field. Thus, students can see themselves in areas such as STEM surprising them. As educators, teachers have the ability to manipulative how the subject matter is conveyed. Through this process, teachers can use it to their advantage by integrating cultural concepts and aspects into lessons.

When educating students about social studies is crucial to include all cultures, ethnicities, and races as each has its individual history each group has its role. Traditional history,

whitewashed history, has been a white center often leaving out minorities and marginalized communities. Therefore, the first step teachers need to take is to educate themselves. Teachers need to address and teach the history of forgotten or neglected groups throughout history. The cultural preparation put into historical content allows students to gain and understand others' perspectives and accounts that add to history as a whole further developing students' historical knowledge. Culturally responsive educated teachers can teach history through a cultural lens that identifies and addresses all of history rather than chosen segmented sections. With inclusive classrooms, discussions can be held between students that further develop their cultural competence and awareness.

Becoming culturally responsive teaches students about differences in viewpoint and that cultural diversity should be appreciated rather than judged or feared. Culture is not a problem, but a resource that can be used both inside and outside the classroom. By having multiple perspectives on the same topic the students can learn many different views which will help them in their understanding of the world around them. Teachers can do this by implementing culturally responsive teaching in the classroom, utilizing the resource of culture for the benefit of all persons in the classroom.

Website: [Culturally Responsive Teaching](#)