Creating a culturally inclusive learning environment

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Goals

1. Understand the importance of creating a culturally inclusive learning environment.
2. Understand the importance of cultural competency in teaching and learning.
3. Identify strategies for teaching culturally diverse students and creating inclusive learning environments.
Collaboration networking activity

• Your name
• Your organization/program & role
• Resources (what do you have to share?)
• Needs (what do you need to meet your goals?)
• 2 minutes each
• Bring your business card to exchange
• You will need a pen to write down great ideas!
Culturally inclusive learning environment

Why does it matter?

Hispanics now outnumber Anglos at Rio Rancho Public Schools

Hispanics Now Majority In Texas Public Schools
The changing demographics of America
Students in America are more diverse than ever!
Culture is central to student teaching and learning

Shift in culture demographics

... Greater cultural Awareness!
# Cultural bingo

Find someone who...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaks more than one language</th>
<th>Knows where their grandparents were born</th>
<th>Has had her/his name mispronounced</th>
<th>Can name a typical food from Central America</th>
<th>Can name 3 American Indian tribes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has lived on a farm</td>
<td>Who is wearing something made in another country</td>
<td>Who makes good Italian food</td>
<td>Has travelled outside the United States</td>
<td>Can explain the celebration of Yom Kippur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is a first generation immigrant to the United States</td>
<td>Has lived outside the United States</td>
<td>Plays an instrument</td>
<td>Has recently met someone from another country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has lived in more than 3 states</td>
<td>Has relatives living in another country</td>
<td>Knows what a kilt is</td>
<td>Has a family member that does not speak English</td>
<td>Knows the significance of the rainbow flag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has attended a “Quinceañera” celebration</td>
<td>Has eaten baklava for dessert</td>
<td>Has a Spanish last name</td>
<td>Can explain what Kwanzaa is</td>
<td>Has visited the crown of the Statue of Liberty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural Iceberg

Surface Culture
Aspects that are visible and easy to identify and know

Deep Culture
Non-observable aspects that can only be imagined, suspected or intuited
Cultural Iceberg

Surface Culture
Observable

- Clothing
- Religious rituals
- Works of art
- Music
- Holiday customs
- Customs
- Learning styles
- Concept of justice
- Definitions of sin
- Notions of modesty
- Motivations
- Ideas of cleanliness
- Communication styles
- Difference between public and private
- Attitudes to rules

Deep Culture
Non-observable

- Eating habits
- Language
- Literature
- Manners
- Music
- Learning styles
- Rules of relationships
- Rules of social etiquette
- Handling of emotions
- Importance of time
- Personal space
- Gender roles
- Attitudes to rules
- Gender roles
- Difference between public and private
- Attitudes to rules
- Gender roles
Defining cultural competence

Cultural Competence:
• Refers to the ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures
• Involves a 3-step process:
  • Cultural Knowledge
  • Cultural Awareness
  • Cultural Sensitivity
Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) creates an inclusive learning environment

**CRT** – pedagogy that recognizes, respects, and uses cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students and backgrounds as meaningful sources for creating optimal learning environments and teaching them more effectively. (Nieto 2000; Gay 2000).
Elements of CRT

1. DEVELOP a knowledge base about cultural diversity

• Understand the cultural characteristics and contributions of different ethnic groups.

• Gain knowledge of the cultures represented in your program.

• Translate cultural knowledge into instructional practice to maximize learning opportunities for students.
2. DESIGN culturally relevant curricula

• Convert the knowledge about ethnic and cultural diversity into culturally responsive curriculum.

• Design curriculum that is interesting to students and relevant to their lives.
Elements of CRT

3. CREATE an environment conducive to learning

• Create a caring environment that is safe and allows students to be who they are.

• Create a learning environment that empowers students and believe in their intellectual potential.
Elements of CRT

4. COMMUNICATE effectively

• Learn about communication styles of different ethnic groups to better decipher their intellectual abilities, needs, and competencies.

• Understand and respect the behaviors and communication styles of ethnically diverse students.
Elements of CRT

5. MATCH instructional techniques to students’ learning styles

• Develop an awareness of diverse learning styles and adapt lessons and teaching techniques that reflect ways of communicating and learning that are familiar to students.
Building a culturally competent learning environment

Scenario:

• Group discussion about results from a hands-on science activity girls and parents did together.
• Some group members don’t speak up, while others dominate, filling all the silences. The more vocal members become exasperated that others don’t talk.
• Seems that the more vocal people belong to the mainstream culture, while the less vocal ones are from minority cultures.

Is there a problem here?
How might we explain this scenario?
How can it be resolved?
Thank you!