

WHY HONOUR CULTURAL DIVERSITY?

In order to create a safe space in the classroom, individuals must experience their culture, and way of being, as being respected or not challenged/harmed. If it is challenged or harmed, a student may *deny their assent to learn* (protective strategy). This is different than *failing to learn*. You need to show that you are interested and open to learning about cultures you are not familiar with. (Diana Nicholson)

Establishing equity pedagogy will help people participate as citizens in a democratic society later on in life. "They will have the skills, knowledge, and racial attitudes needed to work with people from diverse groups." (Banks)

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOM?

"You ask about 'a situation that is not culturally diverse.' I'm going to contest that and say that all classrooms are culturally diverse. And we need to uncover that diversity." (Banks)

*Even in a seemingly homogenous classroom it is imperative to teach about groups of colour and different religions

Porteous Jones (2013) found that teachers in both high-diversity and low-diversity classrooms taught about equity only when they saw a student need, making it more likely for them to *miss* teaching more broadly about diversity. Research findings support the need for anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and multicultural education for teachers in *all* learning environments, not just areas with high diversity.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

Teaching about diversity:

- *Where Children Sleep* by James Mollison
- *This is How We Do It* by Matt Lamothe
- *What I Eat: Around the World in 80 Diets* by Peter Menzel & Faith D'A Luislo
- *If the World Were a Village* by David J. Smith
- *All Are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold
- *A is for Activist* by Innosanto Nagara
- *Counting on Community* by Innosanto Nagara
- *The Day You Begin* by Jaqueline Woodson
- *The Sandwich Swap* by her majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah with Kelly Dipucchio
- *Same, Same but Different* by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw
- *Drawn Together* by Minh Le
- *A Family is a Family is a Family* by Sara O'Leary
- *Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story* by Reem Faruqi
- *The Sneetches and Other Stories* by Dr. Seuss
- *I'm Like You, You're Like Me* by Cindy Gainer
- *Children Just Like Me*, UNICEF
- *A Faith Like Mine* by Laura Buller
- *Info Tales* flip-books:
 - 32 levelled flip-books
 - Side 1 - illustrated traditional folk tale
 - Side 2 - information about country or culture-

A focus on refugees and immigrants:

- *Mirror* by Jeannie Baker
- *Out* by Angela May George & Owen Swan
- *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna
- *Where Will I Live?* by Rosemary McCarney
- *Home of the Brave* by Katherine Applegate
- *I'm New Here* by Anne Sibley O'Brien

Resources for teachers:

- *ELL Teacher's Toolbox* by Larry Ferlazzo & Katie Hull Sypniewski (the section on Culturally Responsive Teaching)
- *Culturally Responsive Literacy Instruction* by Bob Algozzine, Dorothy J. O'Shea, & Festus E. Obiakor
- *Our Wonderful World* Teacher Resource Books

HONOURING CULTURAL DIVERSITY & PROMOTING EXPANSION OF WORLDVIEW IN THE CLASSROOM

An inquiry project by
Denée Nickel

MAIN POINTS:

Six Orienting concepts on culture :

- Culture isn't just what other people do
- Understanding requires taking the perspective of people of contrasting backgrounds
- An understanding of connections is required for an understanding of culture
- Cultural communities continue to change, as do individuals
- There is not likely to be One Best Way
- There is always more to learn

"Social and cultural backgrounds of both teachers and learners unconsciously influence the subterranean learning process and must be taken into consideration when planning and conducting lessons" (Bartz & Bartz, 2018)

Teachers have to engage in a process of self-transformation. This is a process of engaging with the other and understanding that the other is us and we are the other. (Banks)

Teachers ought to do three things and teach kids to do these three things: to know, to care, and to act. (Banks)

"Teaching is cultural work" (Diana Nicholson)

Think: cultural humility instead of cultural competence

CAUTIONS:

- You hold cultural biases and assumptions that you may or may not be conscious of
- Careful not to tokenize students
- Be aware of ethnocentrism
- Avoid stereotyping
- Recognize the relationship between assuming we know about another culture and upholding stereotypes and prejudice
- Do not buy into cultural deprivation beliefs about students from low-income families
- Make sure your strategies are age appropriate.
Example: focus on the students' own heritage in the primary grades, then move on to raising cultural awareness within the school. In middle school, begin building worldview.

JAMES BANKS'S 5 DIMENSIONS OF MULTICULTURALISM

CONTENT INTEGRATION

This is how teachers get started, making sure everyone, various ethnicities and cultures, are seen in the curriculum. "With this dimension, the LA and Social Studies teachers can obviously do more than the Physics teacher ... of course the Physics teacher can display famous physicists that were minorities or people of colour, but that's not really what multicultural education is about."

EQUITY PEDAGOGY

This is where teachers change their methods to enable kids from diverse racial groups and both genders to achieve. Example: Physics teacher not so much adding content about women and minority physicists, but rather changing the way they teach so that everyone can learn physics. This requires paying attention to the cultures students are coming from and personalizing the learning so that it fits them better. Caution: avoid stereotyping – modify your teaching styles so you are using a wide range of strategies and techniques.

PREJUDICE REDUCTION

"Research suggests that adolescent prejudice is very real and kids are coming to school with prejudices toward different groups." All teachers should be sensitive to this whether they are observing it or not, and use methods to help kids develop more positive racial attitudes.

KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION

"This is where teachers help students understand, investigate, and determine the implicit cultural assumptions and frames of reference and perspectives of the discipline they're teaching." Help students understand that when scientists or textbook writers use their words, they are loaded with values and assumptions. Your goal should be to create critical thinkers and readers.

EMPOWERING SCHOOL CULTURE & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Look at the total school culture - grouping and labeling practices, disproportionality in achievement, who participates in sports, in the interaction of the staff, what does the staff look like racially? Who are the teachers and the leaders? "A lot of the time, it's not deliberate racism that is an issue in school culture, it is mindlessness that leads to a practice that is inequitable"

STRATEGIES

- Pen Pal programs. Create international partnerships with schools (Berg et al. 2010)
- Build on students' knowledge in their language of origin. This increases success. (Berg et al. 2010)
- Look at historical unit from different perspectives
- Teach PE games and dances from around the world
- Variety of texts/stories from other cultures
- Geography - talk about landmarks based on Indigenous peoples ways of knowing
- Math design word problems to reflect things that are more relevant to students in the class
- Consider the decor and walls
- Be aware of different communication styles
- Use teaching strategies and resources that reflect students' cultures
- Cooperative learning activities - e.g. jigsaws, inside-outside circles, carousels, world cafes
- Use examples of indigenous peoples as models
- Have high expectations of all students
- Give students freedom to choose how to present information
- Use a variety of assessment practices (holistic)
- Give opportunity for students to explore their own experiences and share (as well as yourself)
- Recognize difference between equity and equality
- Uncover our biases with activities
- Never assume. Ask students what they feel and think.
- Don't remain silent when you witness something that should be addressed
- Make use of drama and role-play to step in to the shoes of someone else or different perspectives
- Address prejudices in media through critical media literacy
- Engage families and community
- Show students how knowledge often excludes or distorts the experiences, histories, and contributions of marginalized groups of people
- Point out biases within discipline/subject areas
- Encourage students to generate multiple solutions and perspectives
- Discuss, with staff, ways to address lack of representation of different cultural groups in school
- Educators should participate in cross-cultural events
- Adapt and extend school rules/policies about discrimination
- Provide student mentorship opportunities in class and school