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Empowering Educators for Success



It's not "just" good teaching: Cultural Competence for Educators

An Overview of the NEA Cultural Competence Curriculum

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Leading Our Professions Competency

Themes we will cover:

- Builds capacity for continual improvement and learning
- Shows educational leadership and understands union's role in student learning and leading the our professions



Session Outcomes

- Familiarize NEA leaders with purpose and content of NEA cultural competence curriculum
- Define “cultural competence” and related terms
- Understand the link between cultural self-awareness and cultural competence
- Identify/share culturally responsive teaching practices
- Plan how to institutionalize and sustain cultural competence throughout education



COMMUNITY NORMS

Stay engaged → Don't check-out

Speak your truth → Say what's in your heart

Experience discomfort → Connect with your feelings

Expect/accept non-closure → Agree to disagree



KEY CURRICULUM FEATURES

- Research-based
- Multiple training modalities
- Subject-matter experts
 - Banks
 - Darling-Hammond
 - Ladson-Billings
 - Nieto
 - Nuri-Robbins
 - Slavin
- Interactive
- Experiential
- Action oriented



WHAT IS CULTURE?

- ▶ A combination of thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, behavior patterns, and practices that are shared by racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups
- ▶ How we do things around here



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DEFINING CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- At your table, discuss and agree on a definition of cultural competence and be prepared to share with the entire group.



WHY DOES NEA CARE ABOUT CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

NEA's concern is related to:

- ▶ **NEA vision, mission, and core values**
- ▶ **Achievement gaps**
 - Performance
 - Attainment
- ▶ **Opportunity gaps**
 - Access



ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

- ▶ **Performance:** Coursework, “pass” rates, and test scores vary with students’ race, ethnicity, language, and socio-economic status.



ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

- **Attainment:** Students of color and LGBTQ students are more likely to drop out—and less likely to graduate from high school or go on to college.



OPPORTUNITY GAPS

Access:

- Students of color are more likely to be assigned to special education classes, and less likely to enter gifted and talented, honors, and AP classes.
- Disproportionately larger numbers of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students are suspended/expelled for the same offenses as their White and Asian counterparts.

This contributes to the “School to Prison Pipeline.”



Dr. Robert Slavin

Professor, Johns Hopkins University



Educators:
examine your
perceptions



TEACHERS AND STUDENTS: Demographic Differences

- **Teachers:** Between 82% and 85% are White
- **Students:** 45% are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American, Black, or Hispanic

Implications: *There may exist wide cultural gaps between educators and their students*



FOUR MAJOR SKILL AREAS OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- **Being culturally self-aware**
- Valuing diversity
- Understanding the social and historical dynamics of cultural interactions
- Institutionalizing cultural knowledge and adapting to diversity

Source: *Promoting Educators' Cultural Competence...*, NEA Policy Brief as adapted from *Cultural Proficiency, A Manual for School Leaders*, Lindsey, Robbins, et al (1999)



CULTURAL SELF-AWARENESS

A first step toward cultural competence is understanding the ways in which our own perspectives are rooted in cultural, racial, and ethnic identity and history.





DR. SONIA NIETO
Professor Emerita, University of Massachusetts



Know
yourself
before
knowing
your
students



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Case Study One

My sister will never forget her first day of school. She was asked by the teacher, “What is your name, little girl?”

My sister responded, “Ciprianita.” The teacher tried to pronounce the name and then respectfully requested, “Can I call you Elsie? It is my favorite name.”

In that one instant, my sister’s linguistic and cultural heritage was politely and unintentionally challenged.... The teacher’s intent was positive. She meant no harm.... But my sister, to this day, still goes by the name Elsie and tells the story with tears in her eyes.

Source: *Cultural Competence: A Primer for Educators*, Jerry V. Diller and Jean Moule, 2005



Case Study Two

Mrs. Gussman is one of the best English teachers in the school. She spends every weekend reading her immigrant students' compositions and making careful comments in red ink. To soften her criticisms, she says something positive before writing suggestions for improvement, using the students' names to make the comments more personal. For example, "Jae Lee, these are fine ideas." Her red-inked notes sent shock waves through the families of her Korean students, but Mrs. Gussman is unaware of this until the principal calls her into the office. She is told that many Koreans, particularly those who are Buddhists, only write a person's name in red at the time of death or the anniversary of a death. Therefore, to see the names of their children in red terrified Jae Lee's parents.

Source: *Cultural Competence: A Primer for Educators*, Jerry V. Diller and Jean Moule, 2005



MAKING THE CASE FOR CULTURAL COMPETENCE:

What happens in its absence?

- In what ways is the teacher's cultural competence reflected in the story? How does this story demonstrate that the educator does/does not value diversity?
- What lessons can we as educators draw from this story?



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- Valuing diversity
- Understanding the social and historical dynamics of cultural interactions
- **Institutionalizing cultural knowledge and adapting to diversity**

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Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge and Adapting to Diversity

- Create Culturally Responsive Classrooms (Positive Classroom Ecology)
- Use Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices
- Develop/Use Culturally Relevant and Culturally Appropriate Curricula
- Ensure Culturally Inclusive School Environment
- Advocate for Cultural Competence throughout the School, the District, and Public Education



WHAT DOES A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM LOOK LIKE?

- Read the scenario silently
- Discuss as a table: Did the educator in the story demonstrate cultural competence and create a culturally responsive learning environment? If so, what elements of it?
- Identify 1 strategy the educator could use to create a more culturally responsive learning environment.



CREATING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOMS

Christi teaches English in a high school that serves two adjacent communities: one is affluent and predominantly white, and the other is working class and culturally diverse. A white woman, Christi grew up in the working-class community, where she developed an interest in diversity. As a student she hung out with different cultural groups, learning their languages and slang, going to their homes, meeting their families. Coupling her own background with a desire for her students to develop empathy rather than hostility toward newcomers, Christi created and taught a unit about immigration. (cont.)



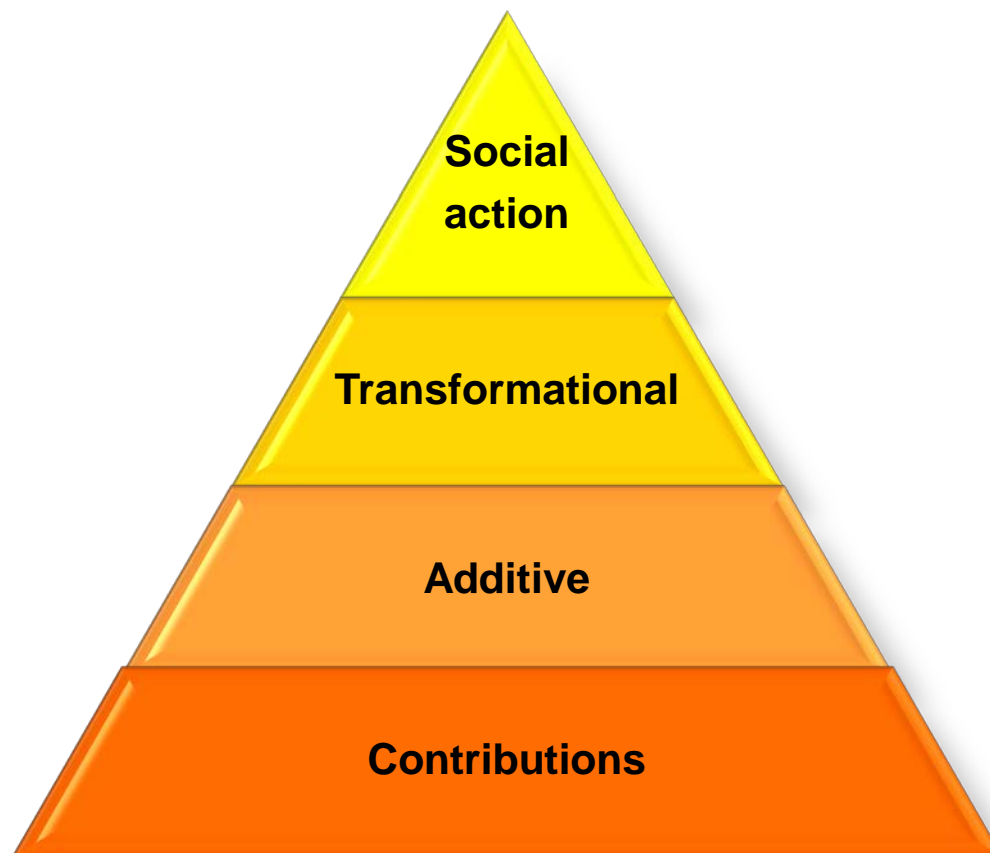
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOMS (cont.)

The unit included writing assignments, such as a diary about school written by a fictitious student immigrant. Christi also had her students read and discuss narratives written from culturally diverse points of view, including a story about a woman with a Vietnamese mother and an African-American father; she was born in Vietnam and grew up in Tennessee after the Vietnam War. The story prompted discussions about biracial identity as well as use of figurative language. Students finished the unit by investigating the provisions of recently-passed immigration laws. They staged a debate for the community about the impact of the new laws on student success. The students in Christi's class were engaged and attentive throughout the unit. They showed marked progress in language arts by the end of the year.



PATHS TO CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

- Foster good relationships among students, families, communities, and schools
- Ensure that classroom environment and instructional methods/materials validate students' cultural identities
- Motivate students to participate actively in learning
- Challenge students to strive for excellence commensurate with their ability to learn—even those with a history of failure
- Encourage students to think critically—to make responsible decisions and think for themselves



Moving
toward
culturally
relevant
curricula

Derived from *Cultural Diversity and Education: Foundations, Curriculum, and Teaching* James A. Banks, 2006



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DR. LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND

Professor, Stanford University



Culturally
inclusive
school
environment



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CULTURAL COMPETENCE IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION

Why?

- Communities change
- We discover new layers of our own cultural assumptions
- The work of bridging cultures is never complete



Summary

In summary, according to Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, a culturally competent educator needs to:

- Understand their own culture, others' cultures, and the role of culture in education
- Take responsibility for learning about students' cultures and communities
- Use students' cultures as a basis for learning
- Communicate high expectations
- Use active teaching methods
- Reshape the curriculum to reflect students' diversity

Source: *Crossing over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms*, Ladson-Billings, 2001



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Please complete the evaluation for this
breakout session!