Appreciating Student Diversity in the Classroom
PIE Fall Workshop
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Ella-Mae Daniel
Teaching Faculty II
College of Education, School of Teacher Education
Florida State University
Forced Choice Activity

• In each corner of the room there are four signs, which indicate a level of agreement.

• As I read a statement, go to the corner of the room that you believe best expresses your perspective on that statement. Be prepared to justify your decision.”
The most ambitious and hardworking students are the only ones who should acquire the most, achieve the most, and become society’s leaders.
Student academic success and support is dictated by building strong relationships with university faculty and staff.
It is the student’s responsibility to get as much out of school as possible.
External conditions, such as culture shock should be overcome by the individual.
Students from all cultural groups and backgrounds can be academically successful.
BREAK

PIE TIME
Workshop Objectives:

• Accommodate a diverse population of students for an equitable instructional environment.
• Examine the role that culture plays in the lives of students and their lived experiences.
• Recognize why the questions
  • “Who are my students?” or “Who are the people/person I’m working and/or interacting with?” is so important to effective interaction.
• Understand characteristics of multicultural education and whether it is a reasonable and achievable goal in the classroom.
Getting Started

Find someone in the room you do not know.

• Introduce yourself to that person
• Spend 5 minutes talking about respect.
  • What does it mean for you to show respect?
  • What does it mean for you to be shown respect?
Golden Rule?

Where did your notion of “respect” come from?

- Does everybody really want to be treated the way you treat others?
- Is it respectful in every culture to make eye contact with whomever is speaking?
- What if somebody’s ideas are oppressive—should we still respect them? And to whose benefit?
Golden Rule Wrap

• Respect is a crucial ingredient in any interaction or discussion; especially in controversial issues:
  • Racism,
  • Sexism, and
  • Economic injustice.

• What’s the point?
  • Learn from our differences-to understand each other’s understanding
  • *Not* to agree, but reflect critically on our assumptions and socializations around the concept of respect.
Relating Respect to the Instructional Environment

Questions to Ask Yourself:

• What aspects of identity affect the way in which we see the world as both teachers and students? Which of these are visible and which are not?
• What values do I hold that are consistent with and different from my student’s lived cultural experiences?
• Are my classroom norms and objectives clear?
• What values may be embedded in my course that may confuse or disturb students?
• Are there cultural biases in the examples that I use?
• What biases, fears, stereotypes do I bring into the classroom?
Multiculturalism

- Allows different cultural groups to maintain their unique cultural identities while participating equally in the dominant culture.
- Understanding multiculturalism can help teachers select appropriate instructional strategies and provide authentic learning activities.
Multicultural Education

Multicultural supports:

- Culture
- Equality
- Diversity
- Democracy
- Social justice
Fundamentals of Multicultural Education

• Cultural differences have strength and value.

• Instructional environments should be models for the expression of human rights and respect and appreciation for differences.

• Social justice and equality for all people should be of paramount importance.
Culture

Provides acceptable patterns of behavior.

Determines how we think, feel, and behave in society.

Imposes order and meaning on our experiences.

Allows us to predict how others will behave in certain situations.
Characteristics of Culture

- It is learned
- It is shared
- It is an adaptation
- It is dynamic
Manifestations of Culture

- Culture is manifested through:
  - Values
  - Nonverbal communication
  - Language
Cultural Pluralism

- Cultural pluralism: Allows multiple distinctive groups to function separately and equally without requiring any assimilation into the dominant society
Cultural Identity

- Our identities in any single group are influenced by our historical and lived experiences and membership in other groups.
- The interaction of these various group memberships within society begins to determine an individual’s cultural identity.
- Identity is fluid and shifts across time.
Cultural Borders

- Cultural borders are boundaries based on cultural differences that may limit an individual’s understanding of persons from a different cultural background.

- As we learn to function comfortably in different cultures, we may be able to cross cultural borders, bringing the students’ cultures into the classroom.
Tips: Successful Classroom Interaction

• What you think is “normal” or “human” behavior may be cultural. Gestures, non-verbal communication and “appropriate” student-teacher interaction varies according to cultures.
• Don’t assume that what you mean is what is understood.
• You don’t have to like or accept behavior, but you should try to understand it.
• Everyone has a race, ethnicity, nationality. Be careful not to set up your own identity as the norm.
• Don’t ask students to represent the groups to which they belong.
• Avoid stereotypes in hypothetical examples.
• Learn students’ names and how to pronounce them.
• Keep your students in mind when preparing your activities/assignments. Vary your examples so you don’t favor students with similar cultural references to yours.
• Be aware of your own non-verbal (facial expressions, body language, etc.) behaviors.

Adapted from: Aleks Nesic, Appreciating Student Diversity in the Classroom
Cross-Cultural Solutions

- Awareness of one’s own cultural bias
- Assessing students cultural beliefs
- Addressing the particular expectationsthat arise from cultural differences in perception of issues
- Inquiring and using culturally appropriate behaviors
- Considering cultural factors in any interactions
- Considering the cultural importance of yourself and informing the other party - setting up classroom norms and objectives - creating safe space

Aleks Nesic, Appreciating Student Diversity in the Classroom
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t7
Fundamentals of Multicultural Education

• Cultural differences have **strength** and **value**.

• Instructional environments should be models for the expression of **human rights** and respect and appreciation for **differences**.

• **Social justice** and **equality** for all students should be of paramount importance in the instructional environment.
Reflecting on Diverse Teaching Practices

- Teachers who create opportunities for students to individually and collectively analyze their learning, encourages self-development of social order.
- Effective teachers are able to change their teaching strategies when students are not learning.
- Self-reflection is a critical skill for improving your teaching.
Reflection Questions

• How do your own experiences, values, beliefs and stereotypes influence your knowledge and understanding of groups that are different from your own?

• How do your own experiences, values, beliefs and stereotypes inform the way you interact with students whose racial background is different from your own?

• How do your own experiences, values, beliefs and stereotypes influence the way you behave in the classroom?

Catherine Ross, Institute for Teaching & Learning, catherine.ross@uconn.edu

In Aleks Nesic, Appreciating Student Diversity in the Classroom
References

• Aleks Nesic, Appreciating Student Diversity in the Classroom., Florida State University, Center for Global Engagement, Division of Student Affairs, Anesic@fsu.edu


• http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t7
Contact

Ella-Mae Daniel

School of Teacher Education
College of Education, Florida State University
1114 W. Call Street
G107 Stone Building
Tallahassee, FL 32306
epdaniel@fsu.edu
http://education.fsu.edu/