International Christian Community of Teacher Educators Journal

Volume 11 | Issue 1 Article 5

2016

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Swensen, D. R. (2016). A Faith-Based Context for Culturally-Relevant Instruction. *International Christian Community of Teacher Educators Journal, 11*(1). https://doi.org/-

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Preparing prospective teachers who are equipped to successfully educate students from culturally, racially, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds is critical work conducted by universities. This paper investigates how culturally-relevant pedagogies with biblical underpinnings have the potential to create educational environments that promote excellence, reflect the culture of the students and their communities, and develop awareness of societal injustices which inspire and equip prospective teachers to become agents of change. This approach is then illustrated through the course design and instructional strategies used in an introductory education course at a Christian liberalarts university.

This article is available in International Christian Community of Teacher Educators Journal: https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/icctej/vol11/iss1/5

Volume 11, Issue 1:

The ICCTE Journal

A Journal of the International Christian Community for Teacher Education

A Faith-Based Context for Culturally-Relevant Instruction

Danny R. Swensen, Bethel University

Abstract

Preparing prospective teachers who are equipped to successfully educate students from culturally, racially, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds is critical work conducted by universities. This paper investigates how culturally-relevant pedagogies with biblical underpinnings have the potential to create educational environments that promote excellence, reflect the culture of the students and their communities, and develop awareness of societal injustices which inspire and equip prospective teachers to become agents of change. This approach is then illustrated through the course design and instructional strategies used in an introductory education course at a Christian liberal-arts university.

Introduction

Over the last few decades, traditional teacher education programs have come under increasingly severe scrutiny and criticism. One critique is that teachers are not prepared to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students from culturally, racially, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds and therefore are not adequately equipped to teach in diverse environments (Howard & Aleman, 2008). Howard and Aleman (2008) emphasize that how we think about teaching in diverse settings needs to be influenced by "the persistent and disproportionate academic underachievement of scores of culturally diverse and low-income students" (p. 169). In this regard, prospective teachers must be challenged to critically analyze how their ideas and philosophies will impact their work as an educator. This reflective process requires teachers to not only consider how their actions and decisions affect the students in their classroom, but to also consider institutional and societal impacts. As a result, this reflection should be transformative in nature in that it promotes individual growth as well as inspires educators to become agents of change in their schools, their communities, and in society.

This paper explores a culturally-relevant approach (Ladson-Billings, 1995) with biblical underpinnings as a way to prepare future educators to successfully work with students from diverse backgrounds. In addition, a practical perspective is provided through a description of how such an approach was used in an introductory education course at a Christian, liberal-arts university.

Biblical Underpinnings of Culturally-Relvevant Instruction

In the seminal work, But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Ladson-Billings (1995) defines culturally-relevant teaching as a "pedagogy of opposition that is committed to collective empowerment" and is grounded on three propositions: "(a) Students must experience academic success, (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (p. 160). In this section, each of these principles is explored using a biblical context.

In regard to the first principle of culturally-relevant instruction, Ladson-Billings (1995) contends that in order to instill students with the necessary academic, social, and political skills to be contributing participants in our society, it is essential for teachers to partner with students as they journey through a curriculum that is embedded with relevance and meaning. An essential component of this principle is that instruction is designed in such a way that all students choose to pursue and realize academic excellence. Such an approach is consistent with the beliefs of Christ followers, because how Christians treat others provides a clear reflection of faith. This relationship between

the treatment of others and faith is discussed in James' epistle. According to Stulac (2003), James 2:1-7 indicates that showing favoritism is inconsistent with our faith. Stulac states, "If they were to show partiality toward certain people because they are rich, these Christians would be acting as if high position came by wealth instead of faith. In that sense, favoritism is a clear contradiction of faith" ("Favoritism Contradicts Faith," para. 3). Furthermore, James 2:8-13 emphasizes that favoritism is not limited to how people are treated in terms of their socioeconomic status: "Favoritism is the sin of extending special favor to some people for self-serving purposes" (Stulac, 2003, "The Essence of the Royal Law," para. 5). In terms of education, this could include factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Accordingly, one way educators can live out their faith and instruct in a culturally-relevant manner is by showing no favoritism through the creation of educational environments that engage and educate all learners.

The second principle of culturally-relevant instruction indicates that teachers must interweave academic excellence with cultural integrity so that students can become or remain culturally-grounded (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Ladson-Billings (1995) explains, "Culturally-relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (p. 161). An important aspect of this principle related to antioppressive education is reaching students on the margins in a meaningful way. Kumashiro (2002) maintains that in order to teach the "Other," the complexity of defining the "Other" needs to be considered (p. 37). Kumashiro contends that to do this, teachers must get to know their students and make a continuous effort to connect with those students outside of the mainstream. Kumashiro indicates that "rather than assume that a student's class background or community has no bearing on how he engages with schooling, educators could acknowledge the realities of day-to-day life that can hinder one's ability to learn" (p. 36). Kumashiro reasons that educators should not "ignore the differences in their students' identities" and should instead "learn about, acknowledge, and affirm differences and tailor their teaching to the specifics of their parent population" (p. 36). He makes it clear that antioppressive educators take the time to learn about their students' lives, backgrounds, interests, communities and cultures and use that information to inform their practices. Likewise, Delpit (2006) states, "We must keep in mind that education, at its best, hones and develops the knowledge and skills each student already possesses, while at the same time adding new knowledge and skills to that base" (pp. 67-68). These authors make clear the importance of drawing on the cultures of the communities in which the students live and then finding effective ways to build on that knowledge.

However, despite the efforts of even well-intentioned educators attempting to address issues of diversity in their teaching through the use of the cultural and background information of students, their approaches to teaching and learning can still marginalize students. Davies (2003) claims, "Despite the multiplicity and variability of teacher knowledges" (p. 41), students often lack the freedom to challenge, reject, or reinvent the interpretations presented by the teacher. She reasons that while students' experiences and background knowledge are often welcomed and used by educators who mean well, "what is brought must conform to tightly set knowledge boundaries and to acceptable forms of saying or knowing, and will be subjected to teachers' authoritative scrutiny, interpretation, and evaluation" (p. 41). In this regard, Kumashiro (2002) contends that "antioppressive educators have an ethical responsibility to reflect constantly on students that they may be disposing of, and on how to rework their practices" (p. 203). Said another way, instruction must be informed by how students learn and not based on the expectation that students learn by adapting to the teacher's approach to instruction (Noguera, 2003). These authors contend that in addition to the use of cultural and experiential information, the foundational and structural aspects of approaches to teaching and learning are also critical.

The importance of individuals investing in and developing meaningful connections with those they encounter are important biblical themes. James argues, "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers" (James 2:8-9, New International Version). Stulac (2003) makes the case that:

> Loving your neighbor as yourself requires an openness to friendship with any neighbor -regardless of that neighbor's wealth, position, status, influence, race, appearance, attractiveness, dress, abilities or personality . . . The royal law absolutely prohibits

> the Christian from joining in the favoritism. The follower of the royal law will reach out to any neighbor. ("The Content of the Royal Law," para. 2)

Stulac's point is illustrated in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), where Jesus reminds us that we are to love and show mercy to our neighbor (i.e., anyone that we encounter in life's journey). In the context of education, Christian educators are called to love and show mercy through the building of meaningful relationships with each child and by designing a curriculum that is relevant and an environment that is engaging for every student.

The third component of culturally-relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) requires that "students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequalities" (p 162). Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that students must become agents of change, equipped to challenge institutional and societal injustices. Likewise, Kumashiro (2002) reasons that simply discussing differences is not enough and is one reason that the education system continues to be oppressive. Kumashiro states, "We resist learning that will disrupt the frameworks we traditionally use to make sense of the world and ourselves" (p. 57). To move forward, the practices of educators must challenge the current system that privileges certain identities, social relations, and worldviews.

These perspectives are aligned with our commitments as followers of Christ. Anderson (2011) indicates that the words justice, just, or justly are used 530 times in the English Bible. For instance, Isaiah speaks of fasting from injustice, rather than fasting from food. The prophet states: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke" (Isaiah 58:6). In a similar way, Micah challenged the Israelites, as well as Christians today, to live in a way that is fundamentally different from worldly standards (Gilliard, 2013). The Israelites were being asked to confront the injustices in their institutions and in their society; God was expecting more than religious rituals and sacrifices. Both Micah's (Micah 6) indictment of the treatment of the marginalized populations in Israel and Isaiah's bold words should be a call to action for all educators. Gilliard (2013) states that:

> Most believers today acquiesce to societal injustices because we do not feel convicted when we see or learn about them. We act apathetically because we know how radically different our lives would look if we were to intentionally step outside of our comfort zones into the faithfulness to which Scripture calls us. (para. 6)

According to Gilliard, followers of Christ are expected to step out of their comfort zones in order to address injustices that marginalize individuals not just on an individual level, but on an institutional and societal level. For educators who are followers of Christ, this takes on a dichotomous nature: They are called to address societal and institutional injustices as well as prepare their students to be aware of injustices and equip them to challenge those injustices.
Creating educators who can be effective agents of change, though, can be challenging. Many teacher education programs ignore scientifically-based methodologies and practices and as a result are not adequately preparing teachers to meet the challenges of the modern-day classroom (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2015). Additionally, having spent years in the role of a student exposed to ineffective pedagogies, educators often have misguided conceptions of effective teaching practices and resist innovative practices that could lead to meaningful change (Rogoff et al., 2007). Rogoff et al. contend that:

> School reform efforts seldom pay sufficient attention to the need to address the repertoires of adults themselves, which often requires opportunities to participate in new practices in order to make the paradigm shift required for them to develop new ways of assisting others' learning. (p. 508)

This would indicate that in order to break the cycle of educators maintaining the status quo, teacher education programs need to be built on coursework that includes the opportunity for students to experience more appropriate instructional strategies, ideas, and activities. Perhaps an exposure to effective approaches to teaching and learning will convince prospective teachers to incorporate them into their own practice.

To be effective facilitators of change, prospective teachers must also have the opportunity to examine their beliefs and practices in other meaningful ways. While

prospective teachers often resist honest and thoughtful reflection related to structural injustices and inequities, this process is a critical aspect of becoming an advocate for change (Woodrow & Caruana, 2016). Liston and Zeichner (1991) argue that it is critical for teachers to consider whether their beliefs are accurate, how those beliefs connect and interact with the perspectives and principles of others, and whether those beliefs can be justified morally and politically. Liston and Zeichner state that if "one of the goals of teacher education is to enable future teachers to construct reasonable and justifiable professional identities, then it seems that their implicit social beliefs should be identified and scrutinized" (p. 85). As part of this analysis, Liston and Zeichner contend that it is essential for teachers to examine their social knowledge and conceptions. In addition to the impact within their own classrooms, educators must understand how their educational objectives are affected by societal and institutional forces. Ultimately, it is important that the critical reflection related to educational beliefs and practices takes place in a social context as this reflection is an essential springboard in developing educators who are equipped to be world-changers and reconcilers in their work with students from diverse backgrounds.

Helping prospective teachers develop the resources and the drive to become agents of change in their field experiences is challenging. However, Lane, Lacefield-Parachini, and Isken (2003) have shown through their research and work with prospective students that it is possible. The authors report, "The student teachers became 'change agents' in part by engaging their guiding teachers in dialogue about how students learn and how best to facilitate their learning" (p. 66). Successful teacher education programs must develop reflective practitioners who have the wherewithal to see the injustices most closely connected to their students' lives, the knowledge to interweave relevant themes of injustice into the curriculum, and the courage to challenge the status quo.

In the end, culturally-relevant pedagogy allows educators to live out their faith in real and meaningful ways. This can be accomplished through laying a foundation that is built on the expectation of academic excellence for all students, by designing an environment where students mature as culturally-competent individuals, and by developing in students an awareness of injustices that prompts them to action. In the next section, the principles of culturally-relevant instruction as used in an introductory education course are described.

Application in an Introductory Education Course

This section examines my journey of incorporating culturally-relevant pedagogy in an introductory education course at a Christian university. The Introduction to Education course is a three-credit hour, semester-long course generally taken by sophomores and juniors, and is the first course taken by students who plan to pursue an education degree. Topics include: (a) historical and philosophical foundations of education; (b) approaches to teaching and learning; (c) collaboration with colleagues, families and communities; (d) legal and ethical issues; (e) professional development; (f) diverse learners; (g) special education; and (h) lesson planning. Taken concurrently with the course is a one-credit hour practicum experience which involves at least 32 hours in a classroom setting. While practicum experiences vary, in addition to observing their cooperating teacher, students often have the opportunity to interact with individual students, to work with small groups of students, and to teach lessons to the entire class.

In regard to the design of the course, Brookfield's (1995) work, Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher, informed the creation of the outcomes, assessments, and experiences for teaching and learning. Brookfield lays out four critically-reflective lenses through which we can view our teaching: (a) our autobiographies as learners and teachers, (b) our students' eyes, (c) our colleagues' experiences, and (d) the theoretical literature. The autobiographical reflections ultimately act as a springboard to better examine and analyze information gained through the other three lenses.

The use of Brookfield's (1995) first lens informed the creation of a culturally-relevant classroom. For example, the reflection on my learner experiences revealed the importance of taking the time to learn each student's name by the end of the first week, and being able to pronounce it correctly. Making use of materials and resources which are relevant, rigorous, and practical is also a critical aspect of any course. In addition, in an introductory education course there should be opportunities for students to reflect on why they want to become a teacher and how educators can effectively work with students from diverse backgrounds.

Likewise, the consideration of my autobiography as a teacher confirmed that students need to be engaged in meaningful ways and that the course should be built on the background knowledge and the experiences of the students. This reflection also indicated that a varied collection of materials should be used to present diverse perspectives based on factors such as race, culture, socioeconomic status, gender, age, and profession. In this regard, peer-reviewed journals, articles, blog posts, and TED Talks were used in the course to present the perspectives that included, (a) a black female who is a speaker, blogger, and an award-winning writer, (a) a white female who is an academic researcher, (b) a white male who is a pastor, and (d) a Hmong female who is a speaker, writer, and an educator. My reflections also revealed that students should have time to analyze and reflect on the material in a private setting before being part of the collaborative environment in class. This approach also allowed me to read the posts prior to class so I could design a class session partially built on the perspectives and insights of the students.

Additionally, the autobiographical lens informed the design of an instructional unit for the course where students considered educational issues related to Native Americans in Minnesota. As part of this unit, students analyzed and reflected on the following materials: (a) a four-part Star Tribune editorial series titled "Separate and Unequal" (Burcum, 2015), (b) Aaron Huey's (2010) TED Talk "America's Native Prisoners of War," and (c) the articles "Traditions & Culture" (Running Strong for American Indian Youth, n.d.) and "The Poverty Cycle" (Running Strong for American Indian Youth, n.d.) from the website Running Strong (i.e., a non-profit organization co-founded by Billy Mills). One objective of this assignment was to help the prospective teachers understand the importance of helping their future students excel academically and maintain their cultural competence. One of the prompts that the students responded to was: How did the material extend or push your thinking in new directions? An example of the student reflections was posted by Anna (all student names are pseudonyms), a sophomore in the Introduction to Education course, who is strongly considering an educational career that involves working with the Native Americans in Kansas. After reading the material and watching the video, Anna wrote (all quotes are used with permission of the student):

> In the Ted Talk by Aaron Huey, he said how the Lakota have welcomed him as family and call him "brother" and uncle," but they also call him "wasichu," which means non-Indian. Even though Huey has gained the trust of the Native Americans, he will still always be non-Indian. I think this will be important to remember as I continue to think about working on a reservation. I must realize my whiteness and the broken promises made by my ancestors to the innocent Natives. In the schools, I must recognize the white privilege I have so my students can truly learn. I must realize I will always be a "wasichu" to the Native Americans. My class and I will have to do many trust exercises so we can create a learning relationship. I want my students to learn from me, but I also want to learn from them. The hardest part will be forming the trust needed for me to impact their lives and for them to impact me.

One aspect of Anna's reflection that we considered as a class the next day is found in the final two sentences: the idea that learning is a shared journey. Anna seemed to understand the importance of a symbiotic, mutualistic relationship (which Anna referred to as a learning relationship) where both parties benefit and grow from a relationship that is based on trust. Her realization of the significance of educational partnerships with students was a potentially important step in her understanding the value in creating an environment where all students can achieve academic excellence and where the curriculum is built on the cultures represented in the classroom.

In designing the course, I also tried to draw on student perspectives in a number of different ways (i.e., Brookfield's (1995) second lens). For instance, I had conversations with current and former students about their experiences in the Introduction to Education course and, more generally, their experiences in relation to ¬¬¬Bethel's education program. I intentionally sought out a diverse group of voices in an effort to get more robust and meaningful feedback. These discussions with students considered areas of strength as well as ideas for improvement and growth. Common themes that emerged from these conversations included the need for better preparation of students to work in diverse and urban settings, an increased focus on classroom management issues, and additional opportunities for students to learn about and teach lessons with

social justice themes. As a result, these components were intentionally incorporated in the course goals, assessments, and activities for teaching and learning.

I was also committed to build meaningful relationships with each student in the course. During the first two weeks of the semester, I met with each student in the course for an informal conversation; these meetings were an opportunity for me to get to know the students, for the students to learn more about me, and for me to show that I valued them. The investment in relationships was an important component of building trust that paved the way for honest and meaningful discussions; this was especially evident when tackling tough educational issues related to race, culture, gender, class, and poverty. Learning about each student was also beneficial in regard to helping me maintain cultural competence through making use of what I learned about the students' culture to inform instruction (see Ladson-Billings, 1995). More formal mechanisms to obtain student perspectives were also used. I sought out written (and anonymous) feedback from the students at midterm about how the instructional methods were working for them as a learner. Based on the feedback, I made a few minor, but meaningful, changes to my instruction during the second half of the semester. Moreover, at the conclusion of the course I used the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction to reflect on course objectives, assessments, and activities. Overall, a variety of student viewpoints provided information in relation to developing a culturally-relevant classroom.

Consideration of my colleagues' experiences (i.e., Brookfield's (1995) third lens) was also valuable with respect to enriching the curriculum. Through conversations with Bethel University colleagues both in and outside of the Education Department, K-12 practitioners, and other stakeholders outside K-12 education, I was able to secure extremely useful information related to culturally-relevant instruction. As with the students, I talked with a diverse group of individuals. Common themes that emerged from these conversations included the importance of preparing educators to work with diverse populations, encouraging students to seek out relationships with individuals who are different from them (e.g., in terms of culture, race, gender, socioeconomic status), and walking alongside students as they seek to serve and honor Christ through making the best of their God-given talents. Moreover, these conversations reinforced the need to not only develop in students a critical consciousness of societal injustices that inspires them to become change agents (see Micah 6 and Ladson-Billings, 1995), but also emphasized the importance of challenging them as prospective teachers to take a similar approach with their students. Through the consideration of my colleagues' perspectives, it became clear to me that the themes and objectives outlined above needed to be at the core of my instructional practice.

One example of this collegial influence is illustrated in the highlighting of injustices through the incorporation of course materials (i.e., activities, readings, and videos) which had the potential to motivate students to become advocates for social change. Specifically, one of the objectives of the aforementioned Native American reflection activity was to allow students to consider the need for creating awareness for and advocating for social change. This reflection activity challenged many students to consider, in a new way, the injustices in the educational system for many Native Americans. One student, Kelly, was particularly moved:

> I never thought of Native Americans as being a people group in need. Honestly, this assignment has really thrown a wrench in my life plan because I feel a distinct call to help these people. I don't know how my skill set of teaching English can come into help for them, but I want to do something. I just need to figure out how and what.

Even though Kelly was not sure how to respond, she was clearly motivated to do something as a result of her interaction with the material. While there were some students, like Kelly, who were unsure how to respond, other students were driven to take specific actions. For instance, some students wrote lesson plans for their practicum classrooms that emphasized a variety of historical and present day issues related to justice.

Finally, the fourth lens (Brookfield, 1995) emphasizes the importance of immersing oneself in the theoretical literature. This lens proved to be illuminating and helpful as the background research on culturally-relevant instruction drove the overall course design and provided a strong foundation for the course. In addition, the reflection using this lens, in conjunction with the other three lenses, led to the inclusion of course

assignments and activities where students were able to explore the biblical underpinnings of the course (e.g., Micah 6, Isaiah 58, Luke 10: 25-37, Matthew 5-7; James 2). For example, the work of a variety of researchers (e.g., Ritchhart, 2015; Tishman, Jay, & Perkins, 1993) informed the use of Visible Thinking Routines (Ritchhart, Church, & Morrison, 2011) to address, at least in part, the course objectives. Visible Thinking Routines were developed by the Harvard Graduate School of Education based on decades of classroom research and research related to student learning and thinking. There are dozens of different routines that can be used in various settings and disciplines which promote thinking and make that thinking visible to others. These researched-based strategies that get students to engage with, analyze, and discuss various media (i.e., articles, blogs, podcasts, and video clips) were used to address all three principles of culturally-relevant pedagogy. For example, the "Claim Support Question" thinking routine was used to promote cultural competence. This routine asks students to respond to the following prompts: (1) make a claim about the topic, (2) identify support for your claim, and (3) ask a question related to your claim (Ritchhart et al., 2011). Students posted their responses on a course Moodle site the night before class so that students had the chance to engage with material in an individual setting before further unpacking it with peers and the teacher in the classroom environment. Having students post their responses prior to class gave me an opportunity to preview student insights and perspectives which acted as an important foundation and springboard for in-class discussions and supported the maintenance of cultural competence.

The use of thinking routines as a reflective tool is illustrated in the Biblical Framework Activity. As part of this assignment, students read an article and watched two sermon excerpts related to the issues of justice, mercy, and humility. One objective of this assignment was to help students see that justice and mercy are more than just a feeling and that some action is required both in relation to biblical and culturally-responsive principles. After engaging with the material, the students reflected using the "Connect Extend Challenge" Thinking Routine (Ritchhart et al., 2011): (a) how are the ideas and information presented connected to your work as an educator?, (b) what new ideas did you get that extended or pushed your thinking in new directions related to your work as an educator?, and (c) what is still challenging or confusing for you to get your mind around? Kate, a junior, shared what extended her thinking:

> I have often felt empathy and compassion towards others, and I think sometimes I have thought that by feeling this way I am being merciful, and that is enough. But this video has made me see that it is not about how I feel, but about what I do in response to my feelings. If I feel compassion and empathy towards someone without doing something to help them or working to create a positive change in their life, then I do not really love mercy the way God has called me to.

The use of this thinking routine proved helpful in making Kate's thinking visible to Kate, to the instructor (me), and eventually to Kate's classmates. Kate's thinking provided an important perspective for the class to consider related to one of the activity objectives: the fact that the response (i.e., the action component) is important when considering issues of justice and mercy. The use of reflections such as this one have the potential to promote cultural competence as students are able to see themselves, their experiences, and their words embedded in the curriculum.

Because students have the opportunity to critically reflect on the material prior to class, they then have the chance to work collaboratively and interact in meaningful ways during the class period. For example, when students in the course analyzed readings and videos related to classroom management prior to class, part of the next class session was designed so that students could engage with issues related to classroom management. Specifically, students worked with a partner to create a classroom management case study based on the reflection materials and experiences in their practicum classroom. Each case study was built on a specific classroom management issue, had two or three possible solutions, and included two or three things not to do or say. Once a team completed their case study, they shared their case study with another team. The two teams then discussed advantages and disadvantages related to the various solutions. This approach was partially informed by research (Rogoff et al., 2007) which indicated that teachers will not generally bring new practices (e.g., active-learning methods) into their classroom unless they have experienced or engaged with the practice themselves. This active-

learning approach was also used as it may promote culturally-relevant environments according to Eddy and Hogan (2014) who contend that this methodology benefits students that are sometimes marginalized in traditional classroom settings (e.g., first generation college students, females).

Conclusion

The four lenses of critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995) informed the design and teaching of a course that embodies the three principles of culturally-relevant instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and also has biblical underpinnings. An essential aspect of culturally-relevant teaching is a partnership between the student and the teacher that promotes academic success. This is in alignment with biblical teachings as the creation of an environment where students are expected to work to the best of their ability honors our Lord (Colossians 3:23-24):

> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Culturally-relevant instruction also entails maintaining cultural competence through building relationships with students and personalizing activities for teaching and learning. Moreover, this type of instruction necessitates providing a structure that inspires students to move beyond their comfort zone and raising awareness of how they can become agents of social change to eradicate institutional injustices. Our culturally-relevant work with the next generation of teachers is essential and part of our own work of being change agents in an unjust educational system.

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