CULTURALLY RESPONSITIVE TEACHING: A PEDAGOGY OF INCLUSION

Presented at the 4th OECD Policy Forum on "Strength through Diversity“, May 31-June 1, 2018

Benedicta Egbo
University of Windsor
begbo@uwindsor.ca
INTRODUCTION

• Global migration trends are changing the demographic profile of many OECD countries
• Diversity is a stable reality in Canada (the changing “faces” of Canada)
• Demographic projections: immigrants will constitute a significant proportion of the Canadian population by the year 2031
• Canadian classrooms are characterized by demographic variability

Adapted from Statistics Canada. (2010)
Proportion of Visible Minorities among the School-age population, Canada (Egbo, 2019)

Adapted from Statistics Canada. (2015)
What and how should schools teach students from culturally diverse backgrounds in order to improve their academic achievement & life chances?

**What?** The concept of non-negotiable and negotiable knowledge

**How?** Culturally responsive teaching
DEFINING THE CONCEPT

• Various conceptions; simply:

Culturally responsive teaching draws on students’ culture-bases, lived experiences and ways of knowing to create authentic learning experiences in a social space that fosters mutual respect and critical engagement.
RATIONALE (THE “WHY”)

• Culture mediates learning
• Learners construct their own meaning through interaction with the world around them
• Students from culturally different backgrounds navigate at least two cultures: **Culture base 1 (CB1)** & **Culture base 2 (CB2)**
• The mismatch between CB1 & CB2 may disadvantage, lead to alienation, disengagement, resistance and the development of oppositional subcultures
• The principles of fairness, equity & social justice
THE ARCHITECTURE OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

Policy
(Macro & Micro Levels)

Knowledge-base

Practice & Praxis
(Tools & Strategies)
Policies:

- Progressive and praxis-oriented institutional policies
- Values ➔ A centripetal force
- Inclusive curriculum
- Teachers/educators’ supports
Knowledge-base and Competencies

- Cultural/Intercultural literacy
- Cross-cultural (mis)communication
- Diversity literacy
- Global literacy
- Adaptive skills → The curriculum
- Knowledge of students/families
- Agency → Challenging orthodoxy
- Knowledge of the trajectories of identity & schooling
Practice & Praxis
Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Model (Egbo, 2019)

Pre-instructional Phase
- Content Preparation
- Comprehensive Content Analysis (CBL and CBR)

Instructional Phase
- Implement Inclusive Strategies

Post-instructional Analysis

Modifications
- Contents

Modifications
- Pedagogy
- Language
- Resources
• Should be fair, bias-free and inclusive
• Assessment tools must be culturally responsive
• Varied strategies and tools - written, verbal, performance-based etc.
• Should reflect differential & preferred learning styles
Culturally Responsive Assessment (cont’d)

• Should be cognizant of cultural contexts and language competencies

• Should focus on authentic tasks that provide diverse learners multiple opportunities for success
CHALLENGES TO THE ADOPTION OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

- Institutional structures and policies
- Initial professional training
- Personal beliefs and values
- Binary conceptions of learners (e.g., the construction of diverse students as the “other”)
- Perceived irrelevance of diversity issues
- Limited knowledge of students’ & their communities
- Feelings of inefficacy
Culturally responsive teaching should:

- Interrogate the monopoly of dominant narratives & worldviews in diverse contexts
- Provide culturally relevant knowledge that engages, rather than disenfranchises students
- Be pedagogically grounded in the voices and experiences of all learners
- Increase the life chances of minoritized students

IN PRACTICE…
Culturally responsive teaching should:

- Question taken-for-granted assumptions about what constitutes valid knowledge
- Teach culture and diversity-responsive curriculum
- Examine texts and other resources for bias, exclusions & stereotypes
- Engender transformative learning
IN PRACTICE…

Culturally responsive teaching should:

• Promote participatory and democratic learning environments
• Integrate critical language awareness across the curriculum
• Respect differences while recognizing similarities among individuals
• Promote excellence
In the final analysis, teachers ought to empower *all* their students through the contents they teach and their pedagogical practices. Culturally responsive teaching provides a critical framework for supporting diverse learners.
References