Chapter 2
Turning Good Intentions into Good Teaching:
Five Common Principles for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Higher education classrooms are increasingly diverse in regards to student culture, including race, gender, nationality, and intersecting identities. Yet faculty members oftentimes do not have adequate training in teaching, cultural competence, or intercultural communication. Building upon the principles of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC), the authors in this chapter explore different bodies of literature in order to pull together common principles for promoting culturally responsive pedagogy in U.S. higher education. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on teaching practices that go beyond inclusive intentions, and instead focus on pedagogy that is truly responsive to diverse groups of students, especially in terms of the most prominent cultural aspects, such as race, gender, and nationality. Specifically, five principles are described and detailed: 1) Instructor awareness of epistemology, 2) Recognition of diverse knowledge systems, 3) Inquiry based instruction, 4) Incorporation of student choice, and 5) Expanded use of formative feedback.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education in the United States is massive and becoming increasingly diverse. Across the 50 states and 16 territories, over 2,976 four-year higher education institutions provide credentials to students every year (Snyder & Dillow, 2015). While programs of study, location, and size can vary, a unifying theme for post-secondary education across regional and state lines is the need for culturally responsive pedagogy—a style of instruction based on inclusivity for diverse learners. Whether courses are taught in person or online, it is the responsibility of the institution and, by extension, instructors to think critically about the way they teach.

Higher education institutions should encourage culturally responsive teaching practices because increased access and widespread student mobility in higher education is becoming a norm, both domestically and abroad (Lee, 2016). According to the Pew Research Center, a record number of 819,644 international students came to the U.S. for study in 2012-2013, while 283,332 American students studied abroad during the same year (DeSilver, 2013). Moreover, the majority of incoming international students come from

- China (31.2%),
- India (13.6%), and
- South Korea (6.5%) (Gallup-Black, 2015).

In addition to the mobility of international students, the demographics of U.S. higher education are shifting in light of immigration trends that have increased ethnic diversity. For instance, between 2000-2010, the Latino/a population in the U.S. grew 43%, and contributed to significant population growth in states like:

- Massachusetts,
- New Jersey,
- New York,
- Louisiana, and
- Illinois (Camacho Liu, 2011).

Similarly, the number of Black immigrant students from the Caribbean and Africa has been rising since the 1970s, and currently hovers around 3.8 million people (Anderson, 2015). According to the United States Census Bureau, from 2010 to 2015 those who reported Black or African American increased from 12.6% to 13.3% of the population, while American Indian and Alaska Native increased from 0.9% to 1.2%, Asian from 4.8% to 5.6%, and Hispanic or Latino from 16.3% to 17.6% (United States Census Bureau, 2015). While such population trends can

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