

Chapter 43

Moving Toward Culturally Restorative Teaching Exchanges: Using Restorative Practices to Develop Literacy Across Subject Area–Content

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ABSTRACT

The assumed achievement gap between students of color and their counterparts continues to be a source of public concern. Educators have reacted to this difference in achievement by allocating more and more instructional time to covering instructional content through direct instruction, remediation and memorization of lower order skills without regarding the contextual factors that influence instructional delivery. For more than three decades Geneva Gay has advocated for teachers to match instruction. However, despite best practices culturally responsive teaching still continues to be under-used by teachers. This article explores the use of restorative practices as a mediator for improving teacher sense of efficacy or future facing self-evaluations of knowing what and how to use culturally responsive teaching practices.

INTRODUCTION

The cultural knowledge from learners of color becomes the “funds of knowledge” (Moll, 1992) necessary for developing culturally responsive teaching. The use of culturally responsive teaching practices positively impacts the achievement of urban learners of color (Driscoll, 2000; Gay, 2002; OECD, 2007; Immordino-Yang, 2007; Schunk, 2012; Office of Special Education Programs, 2013) as evidenced by increased instructional engagement, higher academic attainments, decreased chronic absences, less school dropout (Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007) and reduced disproportionate under-representation in academically advanced coursework (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Despite, research confirming that match-

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ing instruction to the culture of urban learners of color makes learning more relevant (Ladson-Billings, 2009) still the practices of culturally responsive teaching remain underused (Siwatu, 2011). This underuse reflects political, symbolic, less responsive, or unresponsive uses of culturally responsive teaching practices, which suggests the so-called “achievement gap” (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Deming, Hastings, Kane & Staiger, 2014) between urban learners of color and their counterparts is the missed opportunity to develop the practices of culturally responsive teaching.

BACKGROUND

Geneva Gay (2001) has defined culturally responsive teaching as matching teaching practices to “... the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse learners to make learning more relevant...” Extending culturally responsive teaching further, Boykins & Noguera (2011) suggest pairing the lesson’s objective with the higher order thinking skills embedded within the learner’s sociological and historical assets. Together, this blend of cultural responsiveness creates an inter-subjectivity or cultural congruence among teaching practices, the lesson’s objective and patterns of higher order thinking skills within the learner’s cultural affiliations, identity, modes of interaction, and styles of communication. Upon this framework, Nieto (2004) cast the use of culturally responsive teaching practices toward balancing social justice and civil rights in ways that reflect how learners of color see the world. By connecting higher order thinking skills embedded within the learner’s cultural patterns with teaching practices and the lesson’s objective culturally responsive teaching practices are useful for deconstructing the status quo, race, ethnicity, privilege, bias, and social class. Despite efforts to use responsive cultural teaching for building equity and affirming the diversity of students, and their communities, its practices remain underused (Siwatu, 2011). Until now, very little research has focused upon exploring the underuse of culturally responsive teaching practices. Previous research had not yet attempted to conceptualize how teacher efficacy mediates the use of culturally responsive teaching. Furthermore, little was known, about how variations in using culturally sensitive instruction shape teaching efficacy’s orientation toward individualism at the expense of using culturally responsive teaching practices to pursue the communalism of African-Americana and Latino-American cultural values. Understanding the factors that influence the underuse of culturally sensitive teaching was necessary for developing approaches or skills that enhance teacher efficacy in using the practices of culturally responsive education to advance urban learners of color toward the Human Right of fractal-interconnectedness valued by African-American and Latino-American cultural structures.

THEORY

This study examined the relationship between teacher sense of efficacy in the use of culturally responsive teaching practices. Having considered the sources of teaching sense of efficacy in using culturally responsive teaching, it is suspected the underuse of culturally responsive teaching practices (Siwatu, 2011) emerges from teaching efficacy that presumes the pursuit of individual mastery to be cross-culturally universal (Bandura, 1977; Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Blackwell, 2007; Helfrich & Bean, 2011). This assumption leads the routines, roles, activities, interpretations, and tools of culturally responsive teaching toward becoming separated from its epistemological source. Therefore, planning, preparing,

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