Chapter 4

Infusing Culturally Relevant Teaching in Teacher Education Curriculum at an Urban HBCU

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ABSTRACT

As the prominent producers of Black teachers in the nation, HBCUs play a critical role in ensuring that educators entering the teaching profession are equipped with the knowledge of what it means to be culturally competent. In this chapter, the infusion of culturally relevant teaching (CRT) in a teacher preparation program at an urban HBCU is explored. Preservice teachers engaged in this work expressed various perspectives and the following themes were revealed based on both written reflections and one-on-one interviews: resisting negativity, prioritizing K12 learners, culture and academic success, and the power of reflection and introspection. Also, an overview of new courses infusing CRT into the current curriculum and an in-depth review of a course solely focused on culturally relevant instruction are included for insights into the process for CRT infusion.

INTRODUCTION

Presently, there is an attack on educators- what we teach, how we teach, who we are as teachers, why we present certain content, and which materials we use. This attempt at the extinction of truth-telling about American history, racism, sexism, enslavement, and other truths about the lived experience of people of color in the United States directly impacts current and future K12 teachers. As a teacher

educator this is simultaneously worrying and empowering but leads to radically embracing culturally relevant pedagogy as a foundation for instruction in teacher preparation. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), culturally relevant teaching (CRT) is "a pedagogy of opposition (1992c) not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment" (p. 160). This is a theory rooted in opposition to standardized instruction and driven by communal engagement. Gay (2002) shares that culturally responsive teaching "is defined as

Table 1. New course titles and descriptions

Course	Course Description
EDUC 201: Introduction to Race and Inequity in American Education	This course explores the history of race, class, and inequity in America's education system and the impacts on all students. More specifically, this course will examine the impact of brown v. board on the curriculum and learning experiences of all students, the historical significance and intention and examine its success. Students will examine current curricula and teacher practices as they relate to race and inequity, as well. This course will explore social, economic, and political issues, with a specific focus on race and inequity and the subsequent challenges with social progress. Students will examine current educational practices, the role of intelligence's testing and imbalanced resources. Additionally, this course will examine how schools are representative of oppression and produces inequities across race and class lines. Further, this course will address cultural incongruence between home and school; as well as, teacher and student. Finally, this course will examine how teachers, schools, and systems can overcome inequities with strategies such as school and curricula reform, culturally responsive teaching, and relevant curricula modifications.
EDUC 330: Theoretical Perspectives and Culture and Cognition in Urban Context	This course is designed to involve preservice teachers in the critical analyze of the historical, sociological and economical foundations pf modern education and how to use these understandings to effectively teach urban students, Special emphasis will be placed on the understanding and implementation of culturally responsive teaching as a means for bridging culture and cognitive development. Students will examine the effectiveness of education in our democratic society, the prevalence of mainstream content and pedagogy, and the political and economic consequences for urban students. Further, this course will require preservice teachers to examine current curricula, instructional goals, as well as planning and implementation of content rich lessons across content areas to determine effective modifications consist with cultural and cognitive processes of students. The primary goal of this course is to prepare teachers with the know, skills, and dispositions to create equitable learning opportunities for urban students.
EDUC 331: Practice What you Teach: Culturally Relevant Teaching Practices in the Urban Context	This course provides an overview of culturally relevant instructional practices and approaches, particularly in the urban classroom environment. Students will examine, critique, and engage in these instructional practices, while assessing their own areas of strength and growth as preservice teachers. Incorporating the perspectives of various scholars, students will explore multiple approaches and determine the effectiveness of instructional practices in their future classroom environments.

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