


Chapter 9

Stratified Perspectives: A Basis for Social Justice and Cultural Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

Decolonizing curricula requires an approach dedicated to the representation of diverse cultural perspectives. This chapter introduces the concept of “stratified perspectives,” a framework designed to foster greater inclusivity and diversity in educational settings. By merging the concepts utilized in stratified sampling, or grouping the population based on shared characteristics and attributes, stratified perspectives aims to challenge curricula shaped by the narratives of the dominant culture. To contest these narratives, multiple perspectives can be utilized to elicit diverse opposing voices. This strategy can become second nature as an andragogic practice. To avoid the bias’s pervasive throughout curriculum and curb the distortion of history, a shift needs to take place to gain the amplification of minoritized voices and recognition of the differences within the human experience.

INTRODUCTION

The American educational system reflects society at large. Beginning in elementary school and gaining pervasiveness through postsecondary, much of the curriculum aligns more closely with the perspectives and experiences of predominantly white, heterosexual men (Biraimah, Roets, & Kurtz, 2024). This Eurocentric focus is not a coincidence; it is a mirror of larger social hierarchies and a sign that our educational content is steeped in biases that perpetuates racial, gender, and other cultural

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inequities. Epistemological racism hides under the veil of Eurocentric curriculum instilling pseudo-superiority that sustains white dominance and white fragility through educational indoctrination (Bell, 2019). Although some progress has been made, as seen in California's support of culturally responsive curriculum, much work remains to be done to fully address these biases. This calls for a paradigm shift within our educational approach.

Racism is structural, systematic, and strategic (Braveman, et. al, 2022) Introducing a potential way to meaningfully decolonize the curriculum, the stratified perspectives approach modifies existing educational content by including the experiences, voices, and viewpoints of multiple cultures to create a more well-rounded delivery of course material. Stratified perspectives provides educators with a systematic design to bring forward alternative, opposing, and differing perspectives to create authenticity within the lessons, activities, and readings provided. This approach enables educators to honor the divergent experiences students bring to the classroom. It also allows teachers to avoid biases and the distortion of course content through the amplification of the voices of minoritized populations, thus recognizing the differences of the human experience (Bain, Kreps, Meikle, and Tenney, 2012).

Educators tend to instruct as they were taught and adhering to predetermined content in a traditionally hierarchical system where the teacher leads and the students listen (Goldin, 1999). In contrast, andragogy is a learner-centric model for adult education and encourages learners to share their insights as part of the curriculum (Knowles, 1977). Andragogy moves educators beyond theoretical frameworks and provides a fluid environment where learning feels more natural as dialog and shared experiences deepen the learning in an authentic exchange of ideas, cultural influences, and historical backgrounds. The combination of providing a forum designed to compare and contrast differing perspectives and a model inviting students to share the role of educating transforms classrooms that thwart racism through the acknowledgement of differing experiences, histories, and the acceptance of multiple truths.

The perpetuation of systemic bias begins in our schools. Although some progress has been made, such as California's efforts to diversify education materials, much work remains. Stratified perspectives offers a comprehensive solution for dismantling the systemic biases ingrained in educational systems through the practice of consciously seeking multiple viewpoints. Portraying history, literature, science discoveries, and mathematical concepts from multiple outlooks aligns with Kendi's 2019 anti-racism philosophy which describes racism as a fusion of racial policies and racist ideas. There must be actions to combat the racism within our educational systems. The stratified perspectives andragogic approach breaks down the old system of educational delivery from a narrow dominant perspective and introduces a replicable model to redesign a structure to decolonizing the curriculum. Stratified perspectives model employs stratified sampling techniques to

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