

Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers



Ana María Villegas

Montclair State University, USA

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Culture

The way life is organized within an identifiable community, including the way community members:

- Use language
- Interact with one another
- Relate to time and space
- Approach learning

Elements in the Preparation of Culturally Responsive Teachers

Fundamental Orientations:

1. Sense of sociocultural consciousness
2. Affirming attitudes toward students from diverse backgrounds
3. Commitment to serving as agents of change and advocates for their students.

Pedagogical Perspectives and Practices:

4. Knowledge of how learners construct knowledge.
5. Familiarity with the lives of their students.
6. Ability to build cultural bridges to learning.

1. Sociocultural Consciousness

An understanding that a person's ways of thinking, behaving, and being is profoundly influenced by his/her location in the social order relative to factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, and language, among others.

Power Relations Among Sociocultural Groups

Sociocultural Category	Dominant Group	Marginalized Group(s)
Race	White	People of color
Ethnicity	Anglo-Saxon	Hispanic, African American
Social class	Middle class	Working class, poor
Language	English (standard)	Spanish, AAVE
Gender	Male	Female, transgender
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	Gay, lesbian, bi-sexual

Sociocultural Consciousness Requires TCs to Understand Their Layered Identity

- Which dimensions of their identity accords them social privilege, and which place them in subordinate social positions?
- How does such privilege and/or marginalization influence their perceptions of others.

Sociocultural Profile

Sociocultural Category	Membership	Status
Race	White	Dominant
Ethnicity	Latina	Marginalized
Social class	Poor/Middle class	Marginalized/Dominant
Language	Spanish/English	Marginalized/Dominant
Gender	Female	Marginalized
Sexual orientation	Lesbian	Marginalized

How Schools Structure Inequalities

- **Non-inclusive and disempowering school curriculum**
 - Content of the curriculum
 - Textbooks
 - Minimizing discussions of controversial topics

- **Biased testing**

- **Instructional tracking**

- **Segregated and unequally funded school systems**

Sociocultural Consciousness Continuum

Sociocult Dysconsc. → → → → → *Sociocult Consc.*

- Hierarchical arrangement of social positions
- Layered identities
- Structured inequalities

2. Affirming View Toward Diversity

Deficit View → → → → → → → → *Affirming View*

Deficit: Students from non-dominant groups are deficient and need remediation.



Affirming: All students have experiences, ideas, and language that can be built on in the learning process.

3. Change Agency

T. as Technicians → → → *T. as Agents of Change*

Technicians: See schools as neutral and accept customary teaching practices uncritically.



Agents of change: See teaching as an ethical activity and assume responsibility for disrupting inequitable practices.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Villegas, A. M. (In Press).
Research on teacher preparation: Charting the landscape
of a sprawling field. In D. Gitomer and C. Bell (Eds.),
Handbook of research on teaching. Washington, D.C.,
AERA Press.

Learning Opportunities Used to Cultivate the Essential Orientations

Coursework:

- Autobiographical writing
- Sociocultural profile
- Games and activities that simulate inequalities

Fieldwork:

- Service learning and field-based experiences (in schools and communities)
 - Tutoring
 - Observing in schools and preparing case study of child
 - Conducting a community study

4. Constructivist Views of Learning

Transmission Views → → → → *Constructivist Views*

Learning

Acquiring → → → Generating meaning in response to new ideas

Teaching

Transmitting → → → → → Building bridges to learning

5.

Learning About Students and Their Communities

- **Students' lives outside school:**
 - *Family life*: family makeup, language use, labor history, immigration history, skills and knowledge used regularly.
 - *Social life*: Use of leisure time, what students excel at, concerns.

- **Students' relationship to subject matter:**
 - Experience with subject matter outside school
 - Pre-existing know and beliefs about spec instructional topics

- **Community life:**
 - Demographics
 - Available resources
 - Formal and informal holders of power

Strategies for Learning About Students:

- ❑ Talking with the students themselves.
- ❑ Having students keep journals and reading them regularly.
- ❑ Attending to students' questions.
- ❑ Doing community studies.
- ❑ Talking with other teachers and/or paraprofessionals who know the students.
- ❑ Spending time in students' communities.

6. Building Brides to Learning

- ❑ Helping students to see links between what they are learning and their current/future lives.
- ❑ Embedding new ideas in problem-solving activities that are meaningful to the students.
- ❑ Using examples and analogies from students lives to introduce or clarify concepts.
- ❑ Using curriculum and instructional materials that reflect diverse perspectives.
- ❑ Tapping community resources.

Learning Opportunities Used to Develop Pedagogical Perspectives and Practices

Coursework:

- ❑ Reflecting on personal experiences as learners.
- ❑ Engaging teacher candidates in the construction of knowledge.
- ❑ Methods course with field-based assignments.

Fieldwork:

- ❑ Observing culturally responsive teachers in action
- ❑ Practice teaching in diverse schools

Culturally Responsive Teaching Components

Personal Transformation

- **Sociocultural consciousness**
- **Affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds**
- **Commitment to acting as agents of change**

Pedagogical Transformation

- **Constructivist perspective on learning**
- **Strategies for learning about students**
- **Responsive teaching practices**

Developing Culturally Responsive Teachers

1. *Sociocult. dysconscious* → → → → → → → → *Sociocult conscious*
 1. *Deficit views* → → → → → → → → → *Affirming views*
 1. *T. as tech* → → → → → → → → → *T. as agent of change*
 1. *Transmission views* → → → → → → → → *Constructivist views*
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5. *Knows little about students* → → → → → → *Knows students well*
 6. *Uses few CRT practices* → → → → → → *Uses many CRT practices*

Suggestions for Future Research

- ❑ We need more studies that examines the development of teacher candidates' pedagogical perspectives and practices for culturally responsive teaching.
- ❑ We need high-quality studies that address questions about teacher candidate learning to teach for diversity at the program level.
- ❑ We need longitudinal studies that follow teacher education graduates into teaching to determine the persistence of culturally responsive teacher learning outcomes over time.
- ❑ We need research that connects the preparation of teacher candidates for diversity and the outcomes of culturally diverse student populations.
- ❑ It would be productive to explore the development of responsive teaching across the different phases in a teacher's career.