Creating a Culturally Responsive School Culture

KECSAC
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Presenter: Dr. Roger Cleveland

“If the fish in your aquarium are not as healthy as they should be . . .

• Don’t blame the fish! Instead, consider changing the water.”
Today At-A-Glance

- Introductions
- Open Mic
- Culture & Learning
- Cultural Mis-match
- Understanding Equity
- Equity Literacy
- Mental Models
- School Culture
- Moment of Clarity
YOU GON' LEARN TODAY
Setting the Context
To reach others, we have to first know ourselves. And to contact the deeper truth of who we are, we must engage in some activity or practice that questions what we assume to be true about ourselves.

--Adapted from A.H. Almaas
We are dealing, it would seem, not so much with culturally deprived children as with culturally depriving schools. And the task to be accomplished is not to revise, amend, and repair deficient children, but to alter and transform the atmosphere and operations of the schools to which we commit these children.

William Ryan, *Blaming the Victim* (1972)

**OPEN MIC**
Courageous Conversations

There are many persons ready to do what is right because in their hearts they know it is right. But they hesitate, waiting for the other [one] to make the first move – and [the other], in turn, waits for you. The minute a person whose word means a great deal dares to take the openhearted and courageous way, many others follow.

*Marian Anderson, 1956*
There are many persons ready to do what is right because in their hearts they know it is right. But they hesitate, waiting for the other one to make the first move—and the other, in turn, waits for you. The minute a person whose word means a great deal dares to take the openhearted and courageous way, many others follow.

Marian Anderson, 1956

Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.

- James Baldwin
Cause I Ain't Got a Pencil
by Joshua T. Dickerson

I woke myself up
Because we ain't got an alarm clock
Dug in the dirty clothes basket,
Cause ain't nobody washed my uniform
Brushed my hair and teeth in the dark,
Cause the lights ain't on
Even got my baby sister ready,
Cause my mama wasn't home.
Got us both to school on time,
To eat us a good breakfast.
Then when I got to class the teacher fussed
Cause I ain't got a pencil.
A Definition for Culture

Culture is the shared perceptions of a group’s values, expectations and norms. It reflects the way people give priorities to goals, how they behave in different situations, and how they cope with their world and with one another. People experience their social environment through their culture.

Culture is transmitted from generation to generation.
Culture Gives Context and Meaning

It is a filter through which people process their experiences and events of their lives. It influences people’s values, actions, and expectations of themselves. It impacts people’s perceptions and expectations of others.
How is culture like an iceberg?

- food
- dress
- music
- visual art
- drama
- crafts
- dance
- literature
- language
- celebrations

Funds of Knowledge  Socio-Economics Status

- Child-Raising
- Definition of Sin
- Concept of Time

- Concepts of Humor
- Body Language
- Eye Contact

- Social Interaction
- Proxemics

- Conversational Patterns
How is culture like an iceberg?
CULTURE CLASHES

Often Silent, Yet Powerful

Often Contentious and Confusing

School Culture & Policies

Belief School Cultures, Values, Language, Attitudes

CLASH

Home/Community Culture

Beliefs, Values, Language, Attitudes
Equity is...

Educational Equity means that educational practices, policies, facilities, academic support, curriculum, instruction, school resources, school climate, and culture etc.... are such that all students have an equitable opportunity, fairness, and access to reach academic excellence, regardless of race, socio-economic status, gender, disabilities, language, national origin, religion or other characteristics.
Equity Goals

• Eliminate systemic barriers to learning

• Eliminate the predictability of success or failure based on any social or cultural factor, especially race, class and primary language

• Discover and cultivate the unique gifts, talents and interests that every human being possesses
EQUITY LITERACY

Equity literacy is comprised of the skills dispositions that enable educators to recognize, respond to and redress conditions that deny some students access to the educational opportunities enjoyed by their peers.

Gorski, 2015
Equality

Equity
EQUITY WALK
Culture and Perceptions
MENTAL MODELS
Mental Models

People: Mindsets

Reference National Guard Bureau, 2007
Mental Models

**Mental Models** are established by past events, experiences, media and other messages we receive, and serve going forward as filters through which we observe, interpret and respond to the world. They shape what we see and hear, what we feel and what we do. Mental models give birth to stereotypes.
The challenge with mental models is that they limit our ways of thinking and behaving. The good news, however, is that they have the potential to evolve through ongoing learning and interaction with new individuals and environments. Becoming aware of our mental models, which are often invisible, is the first step to effectively evolving them - and therefore, to personal growth.
How can our Mental Models become barriers to students’ access and fairness?
Mental Model Exercise
Exercise

- SLUMBER
- DREAM
- BED
- QUIET
- NAP

- PILLOW
- NIGHT
- BLANKET
- PAJAMAS
- SNOOZE

Study the above words for 10 seconds.

Do not write them down!
Exercise

Now, take 30 seconds to write down all of the words that you can remember.
Exercise

TIME IS UP!
Exercise

- SLUMBER
- DREAM
- BED
- QUIET
- NAP
- PILLOW
- NIGHT
- BLANKET
- PAJAMAS
- SNOOZE

How many wrote the word SLEEP?
SLEEP is not in the word list.

What happened in this exercise?
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE
What makes a school or organization culturally responsive, is determined by how effectively the school addresses the dynamics of culture, equity and inclusion through the five Ps:

- Perspectives
- Policies
- Programs
- Personnel
- Practices
The Five Ps come into play because of the rapid changes taking place in our society, these changes are forcing schools to move away from a lethargic business-as-usual, re-active mindset, to a proactive one that anticipates and implements change.

This is where the five Ps come into to play.
**Perspectives:** refers to the vision. What is vision? Vision is the bifocal ability to see what lies ahead (farsightedness), as well as, the various impediments in the present (nearsightedness), and how to avoid them in order to arrive to the future.

A sense of vision and mission, will lead to appropriate **Policies**, the guarantees that make known the intents of the school.
Policies, give rise to Programs, that put in action what education is all about. But effective programs cannot be run without the right Personnel, reflective of the diverse populations you serve.

The last one is Practices, The actual conduct of the school, its students, faculty, staff and administration.
Of these **Five Ps**, the most important one is, **Practices**. A school may have the best perspectives, policies, programs, and personnel, but these are only cosmetic until practiced.
And it only takes a small number of **Personnel**, who in their **Practice** refuse to go along with **Program** or fail to implement the **Policy**, for an otherwise well designed plan to be sabotaged.

The **Five Ps** have to alter present school structures and cultures, especially if these are exclusive and do not benefit everyone in the organization.
CONNECTING WITH KIDS
Connecting with Kids

**Connection**

Welcoming students even when their late

Greeting students warmly at the classroom door

Systematically assuring every student is positively connected to an adult. Using extra-curricular engagement data of all students as a measure of school success

**Disconnection**

Sending students to the principal’s office, regardless of circumstances of late arrival

Working on a paper at desk until students are seated & the bell rings

Assuming most students are involved in extra-curricular activities
Diversity Has Its Strengths

“ The Beaver Is Very Skilled At Its Craft. It Knows Exactly What To Do To Fix A Dam. The Last Thing It Needs Is Someone On The Bank Shouting Out Dam Instructions”.

(IF YOU DON’T THE FEED TEACHERS, THEY WILL EAT THE STUDENTS, NEILIA CONNORS)
IDEA Class Assessment (Exit Slip)

Purpose: The IDEA process provides the instructor with instant in-class formative assessment and instills deep learning in the student.

Identify an important concept learned in class.

Describe why that concept is important.

Elaborate what questions the concept brings to mind.

Apply the concept to some area of your life.
A Moment of Clarity

I learned that ...

I realized that ...

I was pleased that ...

I was not aware of ...
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