Chapter 3
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Considerations for Online Courses

Kelly M. Torres
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, USA

Shani Salifu
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, USA

ABSTRACT

Culturally responsive pedagogy approaches in online learning incorporates a focus on the diverse backgrounds and experiences of learners and aims to create an inclusive learning environment. Using diverse teaching materials, incorporating cultural experiences into course content, and providing opportunities for students to share their experiences and perspectives, allows educators to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Ongoing reflection and self-assessment by educators further helps to ensure that their teaching practices are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all students. Seeking feedback from students, colleagues, and other experts in the field, as well as engaging in professional development and training result in opportunities for continual self-reflection and enhancement of instructional practices. Educators who foster an environment that respects and celebrates the diversity of their students offers access to learning spaces that provide a more engaging and meaningful learning experience for all.

INTRODUCTION

The United States has experienced an extensive history of educational struggles associated with diversity and equity (Hernández, 2022). To address this challenge, researchers and educators have worked strategically to identify appropriate educational strategies to support all learners. This focus is vital given that teaching and learning processes are shaped and influenced by cultural values (Tanase, 2020) which results in greater emphasis placed on the development of cultural understanding. Ladson-Billings

(1990) created the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) to transform educational pedagogy by asking the critical question of "What is the right of minority students" and uncovering strategies that improved the teaching profession. CRP transpired as an educational approach that recognizes and responds to the cultural identities and experiences of students. This pedagogy can involve using diverse and culturally relevant materials, incorporating inclusive teaching practices, and providing opportunities for students to share their cultural perspectives and experiences. Particularly, CRP is an approach in education that recognizes and values the cultural backgrounds and experiences of students and incorporates this knowledge into the teaching and learning process (Howard, 2021). Through this instructional approach, educators can support all students in feeling valued, engaged, and successful in their educational endeavors (Hernández, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2017; Lock, 2017). Emphasis is strongly placed on the importance of an instructor's level of knowledge, sensitivity, and acknowledgement of the influence of culture on learning (Banks, 2019; McKoy & Lind, 2023).

CRP has gained increased attention and importance in recent years due to the growing diversity of student populations and the need for educators to address the inequities that exist within education systems. The identification of methods that instill hope and inspire students is at the forefront of instructor's minds in their quest of efficient instructional approaches (Hernández, 2022). Studies have shown that CRP can lead to improved academic outcomes for students as well as increased levels of engagement and motivation (Byrd, 2016; Cho, 2021; Lau & Shea, 2022; Samuels, 2018; Tanase, 2020). Students exposed to CRP curriculum have opportunities to foster a sense of belonging and community within the classroom, which can have a positive impact on their mental health and well-being. However, implementing CRP into practice can be challenging and requires ongoing reflection and professional development. As a result, instructors must be willing to critically examine their own biases and assumptions and the systemic barriers that exist within education systems. They also must be committed to creating a safe and supportive learning environment that is responsive to the diverse needs of their students. Ultimately, CRP is an important framework for instructors due to the importance it places on all students having access to an equitable and inclusive education. Given the growth and diversity found in online learning environments where students may come from diverse cultural backgrounds and may not have the same access to in-person interaction with their peers and instructors there has been further emphasis placed on this approach within this learning modality (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

CRP calls attention to the significance of recognizing and valuing cultural diversity in the classroom and is considerate of the range of backgrounds and experiences of students represented. Integrating social justice components and raising awareness of cultural diversity allows for increased student achievement in order for leaners to attain their highest academic potential through the inclusion of cultural (Hernández, 2022). Placing emphasis on the importance of building relationships, creating inclusive and affirming learning environments, and integrating students' cultural experiences into the curriculum needs to be a crucial focus (Abdulrahim & Orosco, 2020; Gaias et al., 2019; O'Leary et al., 2020; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021).

Cruz et al. (2019) described CRP as building on the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of students throughout the teaching and learning process. Gaining this insight further guides instructors in their cultivation of curriculum in which they structure outcomes and assignments in a way that makes students

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