

subjects" such as mother tongue, mathematics and English, the other subjects become increasingly narrow. Students get less hours of arts and crafts, music and religion plus social subjects, and I have heard rectors who have told parents that students do not get music lessons because they have to practice reading instead (as if not musical intelligence and reading are related).

Another of the main initiators of the "Ringss-in-Water Conference 2015", Professor Anne Bamford, warns strongly against reducing the practical and creative subjects of the school. She can invest this with research, and her reason was not that practical subjects are "breaks" from the "proper subjects". No, her point is that students get good at reading, writing and calculating when they also develop their creative pages and work with art subjects at school. If they cannot develop their creativity, they are not good at reading, writing and arithmetic. But I'll probably write this later.

Ollie also said that in Finland there are no standardized national tests or samples. They have no national tests and students do not meet an exam before they finish high school (!). I think I will write more about that another time.

Have a nice weekend.

УДК 811.111

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TEACHING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

As a culturally responsive teacher, one of the major goals is to help all students become respectful of all the cultures and people that they will interact with once they leave the classroom. This can be daunting, given that the world at large is infinitely more complex and diverse than the small and confined environment that the student inhabits in his everyday life.

In typical educational and social settings, students tend to show classic belonging or not belonging to a group behavior. In general, most students are comfortable interacting with people, behaviors, and ideas that they are familiar with, and react with fear and apprehension when faced with the unfamiliar. A culturally responsive instruction can help the teacher show the students that differences in viewpoint and culture are to be cherished and appreciated, not judged and feared. A culturally responsive educator can overcome human nature's fear of the unknown and help students become more respectful of cultures with different ideas. For example, a teacher can provide students with evidence that people who do not look or act like them are still people just like them.

A teacher can emphasize this viewpoint by building a culture of learning from one another rather than a culture of passing judgment on differences in values and beliefs. There are a wide range of classroom activities that can help students recognize the essential humanity and value of different types of people. For example, provide students with an opportunity to share stories of their home life, such as family holiday practices, provides fellow students with a window into their peer's cultural traditions. The teacher can show the students everyday photographs of people of different ethnicities, shapes, sizes, and dress. This gives students the opportunity to see people that look very different from themselves and their family engaging in the same types of activities that they and their family participate in. This can help humanize types of people that your students have never had an opportunity to meet.

Another opportunity to show diversity is to welcome guest speakers into the classroom that come from different backgrounds that have made a positive contribution to important fields will also help dispel any preconceived notions that students might possess about the relative competence and value of people from different cultures. Teaching students about multicultural role models demonstrates that people of all genders, ethnicities, and appearances can have a positive influence on the world and deserve to be respected and emulated. It is important to avoid teaching students about the same minority role models repeatedly such as sports figures. If students are taught about the contributions that people of various ethnicities, genders, and creeds have made to a variety of

different artistic, scientific, and political fields, then they are more likely to respect and value diverse culture backgrounds.

A teacher can develop the right environment for culturally responsive learning. Use the wall spaces to display posters depicting cultural groups in a non-stereotypical fashion. Students can mark the countries from which their ancestors immigrated on a world map, and classroom signs may show communication in several languages.

These added touches might seem innocuous, but they go a long way in helping students absorb the rich diversity that surrounds them, both in the classroom and in the world outside the school walls. Such touches will help promote an environment in which students from diverse backgrounds feel more comfortable being themselves and will help insulate students from the cultural and ethnic stereotypes that pervade television and social media outlets.

A teacher can help students embrace their own culture and heritage. Another important goal of culturally responsive education is to teach students to respect and appreciate their own culture and heritage. Minority students will sometimes feel pressured to dispose of their cultural norms, behaviors, and traditions to fit in with the prevalent social order. When this happens, it can create a significant disconnect between the culture of the student's school and community life and can interfere with the emotional growth and social development, of the student resulting in poor performance in social and academic domains.

Providing opportunities for students to investigate unique facets of their community is one effective way to help students gain a greater appreciation for their own culture. Having students interview family members about cultural practices and traditions or write about important learning experiences that the student has experienced in his home community are just two of the many ways that students can explore their heritage.

Using a culturally-centered instructional approach can help facilitate cultural pride among diverse students. Educators must consider the impact of multiculturalism in core curricula such as math, science, reading, and writing. Providing diverse students with examples of diverse contributors to these fields and using culture-specific subject matter when teaching core topics will help them perform better in these highly scrutinized and important domains. Placing ethnically diverse students in a situation that emphasizes the strong points of their culture's preferred means of learning may help provide them with a greater sense of self-efficacy and achievement.

Teachers must be inclusive with their lesson plans, they need to get to know their students. Teachers could ask students to keep a weekly journal at school. A thematic journal of drawings can give teachers insight into students' lives. Not only would this be free writing practice, but it may give teachers insight into the student's life outside school. A strong bond of trust may be formed if students realize their journal is something shared between them and their teacher. Through this, they can manage diversity in the classroom based on issues at hand.

The teacher must also provide an array of different learning tools. Social media sites can increase student collaboration and provide an avenue for students to easily contact one another regarding school projects, group assignments or for help on homework assignments. Using social media in the classroom can encourage more participation. Students who do not participate regularly in class may feel they can express their thoughts through social media. Although this should not completely replace the class participation it can help build the students' confidence and encourage them to find their voice and be able to participate in class.

Classroom diversity promotes student growth and reflection. By talking and listening to people different from ourselves, we learn and enlarge our understanding. Diverse classrooms play an essential role in career preparation. Students are entering job markets with diminishing concern for community or national boundaries. Integrated classroom environments are important in helping students learn to collaborate and communicate with the different cultures and backgrounds found in the 21st century work environment.