



LSLP Micro-Paper 84: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

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Defining the Term

One of the biggest challenges in English language education today involves negotiating language instruction with the different cultural aspects of the communities that our language teachers serve. This is particularly crucial in countries where people need to recognize their diversity and the need for more just and caring pedagogical practices.

To address such diversity, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) acknowledges, responds, and celebrates cultural aspects in students from all cultures and backgrounds. It uses cultural heritage and experiences as resources to help teachers serve students' needs much more effectively, particularly to serve the needs of those populations who feel that they are marginalized, and their identity does not have representation in society.

Culture is bonded with places, times, and societal groups, rendering all the places in the world as potential places where cultures encounter one another to have a dialogue. So, culture is that point of reference, a dynamic system that we have as human beings to give meaning to our lives, it determines how we behave and think affecting our teaching and learning processes, especially when there is a second language involved. It is fundamental to create a sense of cultural awareness, first in teachers and then in students, as the first step toward cultural competence and a socio-political consciousness.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP, we foster the need to deal with social relations and the responsibility of encouraging all students to do their best and learn collaboratively. It means that, rather than promoting individual achievement or competitiveness with one another, we should strive to learn in community and solve problems together. In our practices, our teachers incorporating culturally relevant practices to become more aware of them to then bring it to life in their classrooms. Some of our work with CRP involves connect students with Culturally Relevant Literature where students can see themselves in.

CRP on its own has become a full line of inquiry that intersects with critical literacy and multimodality. We are inquiring about the potential of ideas such as CRP, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies, and Historically Relevant Literacies to support instructional practices in

teacher education and the possibilities for multimodal storytelling as a CRP vehicle. We foresee future avenues of research in the intersection of CRP and Multimodal Critical Consciousness as possibilities to ground their and their students' cultures for self-identity and the appreciation of diversity.

Expanding Second Language Research

Second language teachers need to go through a conscious process within themselves to teach and understand students in a better way. The relationship between language and culture has become a transversal axis that crosses human sciences in various ways. Teachers have to be fluent in their own culture(s) and open to understand and teach it through any second languages. Socio-political consciousness is teaching students that their learning is connected to everyday problems and living of the society and be critical about social inequities.

To make it simple, teachers should first recognize themselves as part of a world that they transform every day, and then they should present those multiple voices and perspectives to their students for them to connect each other's experiences and have their own arguments. This leads to understand that second language teaching needs to have a broader interpretation and CRP must be at the core of it to avoid replicating power and privileges, including our students' lives and contexts in our teaching practices, revisiting second language policies to create a cross-cultural communication with as an essential feature of creating cultural caring with diverse populations. In the end, being aware of diversity is more caring, it is a lifetime work to make language classrooms more just and welcoming to our students.

References

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