

Title:
Culturally Responsive Learning and Teaching

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Executive Summary:

This study focusses on the important role that the teachers play in the education of **all** students today , in particular it focusses upon the Maori, Pasifika students and other diverse students of other nationalities that we have in New Zealand.

School A and School B have been interviewed to ascertain what programmes are being provided to cater for the diversity of the students. Both schools are supporting their students in a wide range of activities which may vary each year depending upon the strengths of the staff that year. The activities range from Kapa Haka, Pasifika dance and songs, Korean dances, Indian dances, Enviro activities, Sporting activities, Camps to develop team work and social skills.

Purpose of the study:

The first part of the study is to investigate how strong relationships are beneficial to students while they are making their way in learning.

Background and Rationale

Much of what the articles and literature has confirmed is that there is a focus on Maori and Pasifika students and their achievement or lack of achievement.

Methodology

It appears that a focus of teaching staff is that of looking at the cultural aspects of the students helps establish an understanding of the students.

Findings

There seems to be an opinion that not all schools are following due process to establish an understanding of Maori or Pasifika culture. Some of the things are not accepted as being culturally expected.

Implications

Research indicates that the majority of academic achievement levels of Maori students is low, they are over-represented in special education programmes for behavioural issues, lower pre-school enrolments, leave school early and with less formal qualifications and less enrolments in tertiary education.

Benefits

Teachers learned to shape pedagogy through interactions with their diverse students particularly Maori.

According to Hargraves and Shirley, the “fourth way” of education reform involves various sectors of society learning to collaborate to give substance to the vision of learning, achievement, and wellbeing of children and youth. There is an emphasis on powerful learning communities, professional learning for teachers, sustainable leadership , networking integration and value for diversity.

Purpose:

It is clear that we need to change the way we use our national curriculum in order that the every student learns and progresses through their learning particularly when their identity, language and culture strengths and aspirations are recognised. Students, parents, whanau and teachers have strong relationships focused on a holistic view of the progress students are making across their learning. Each child’s learning is reflected in their records and give teachers more information about who is coming to their classrooms, their strengths and learning needs. Therefore it is easier for teachers and leaders to respond to the specific needs of each student.

Background and Rationale:

Much of the literature about the recognition and affirmation of student identity in New Zealand context tends to focus of a students ethnic identity, particularly Maori and Pasifika students and the concern for the academic achievement of these groups of students. Therefore these students have been labelled as “priority

learners” by the Ministry of Education Statement of Intent according to Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2009; Hynds & McDonald, 2010; Middleton, 2008.

Methodology:

The teachers’ practice has been shaped by a natural combination of cultural responsiveness and understanding. Within the articles that I have read it appears that cultural understanding refers to an approach that recognises that all students possess an ethnic identity and it helps if they are taught to appreciate their own culture and that of others cultural differences.

Findings:

The major challenges facing education in New Zealand today are the continuing social, economic and political disparities within our nations.

According to McCarthy's paper some teachers believed that a celebration if through the sharing of food, the wearing of costumes helps the students feel more valued.

According to many researches the catch phrase is that cultural responsiveness is all about "relationships". However, it seems that it is about meaningful relationships, and that we must broaden our thinking to ensure that we include the cultural, spiritual and physical wellbeing of all students particularly Maori to encourage our potential leaders of our bicultural nation of New Zealand. We must all contribute to this society if Aotearoa is going to be equitable.

Berryman espouses that "our education system has become more culturally, ethically and linguistically diverse. Rather than benefiting and learning from each other we still expect all students to be represented within the same curriculum, pedagogy and testing regimen.(Berryman, 2008).

Berryman.....

Responsive pedagogy begins with listening – listeners are as actively engaged as the speaker in seeking to make their own sense of what is said. It requires us as listeners to formulate our response or opinions when the speaker has finished.

Implications:

Research indicates that the majority of academic achievement levels of Maori students is low, they are over-represented in special education programmes for behavioural issues, lower pre-school

enrolments, leave school early and with less formal qualifications and less enrolments in tertiary education.

Teacher expectations must remain high and it will therefore increase student achievement through their own effort. Culturally responsive teaching can be considered as making the best learning environment for **all** students. The purpose is to turn theory into practice and copious demonstrations or effective strategies are offered to the students.

We must work together with the practitioners and researchers to build knowledge and work together to increase the research and educative capability with regard teaching and learning.

Many educational researchers believe that the solution for raising the educational achievement of indigenous and other minority groups, is through a curriculum, however it mainly incorporates sociocultural horizontal knowledge. It is believed however that this approach will do little to enable the Maori to achieve what its non Maori counterparts can achieve. It has been found in a study by Lynch (2017) that although the teachers accepted the claim, they have a diverse response. It has been argued that there is a juxtaposition between a vertical academic knowledge base in education and the cause of their educational underachievement (Nash 1997,2001)

Many teachers still attribute Maori failure in school to a lack of interest on the part of the students and their families. Following many meetings in some schools it was the Maori community members who were preparing food for the teachers and they soon realised that the teachers needed to reach out to all the students not just some.

Benefits:

According to Berryman et al., 2013, “Responsive pedagogy begins with listening so that the listeners are trying to make their own sense of what is being said, and to formulate a response when the speaker has finished. Responsive pedagogy works from a place that we can believe in and effect change in our society through the realised potential of the future leaders we work with.”

Recent research by Kahnemann, (2011) there is a full range of activities, has an effect on the cognitive abilities. Activities such as rote learning and repetition. It is the over reliance on one strategy or approach that causes a problem.

In the book *Te Kohitanga* by Bishop, Berryman and Wearmouth following their research into numerous schools, it was evident that through a structured process for building and learning through relationships, it provided a shift towards classroom pedagogy and Maori students seemed to work better and achieve more. Teachers learned to shape pedagogy through interactions with their diverse students particularly Maori.

According to Hargraves and Shirley, the “fourth way” of education reform involves various sectors of society learning to collaborate to give substance to the vision of learning, achievement, and wellbeing of children and youth. There is an emphasis on powerful learning communities, professional learning for teachers, sustainable leadership, networking integration and value for diversity.

Respectful relationships of Trust was seen as fundamental. Each party (students and teachers) were seen as being able to trust and value the input of the other. The most important part is to establish trust with families in order to empower them to feel part of the team including the child. Special needs or culturally diverse. Our role as a teacher is to provide advice and guidance as well as assessment and programming. Family members feel very supported by all if their culture is understood.

Instead of focussing on the deficits in the child there are benefits from seeing the child, community and their culture as part of the solutions. When everyone agrees it is easier to contribute towards the well-being of the child and the on-going participation of the family.

Berryman and Eley, 2017, believe that educators are working to enact responsive pedagogy:

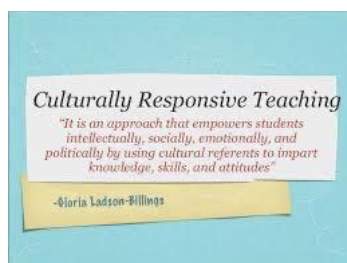
- Nurture relationships of care and connectedness between culturally located individuals
- Value and legitimise multiple views of knowledge and ways of knowing
- Recognise the potential in everyone
- Identify and extend what students already know, understand and can do
- Engage students in the planning and evaluation of their own learning
- Use a wide range of information or evidence, or both to understand, monitor and evaluated the needs of their students

- Position themselves as learners alongside other learners
- Build connections between homes and school
- Challenge established practice through critical reflection and iterative evaluation
- Use a full spectrum of interactions and strategies appropriate for their students
- Empower students to understand and transform their current realities

Conclusions:

The hard part is taking seriously implications of a compelling vision of schooling that actually serves all children and youth well.

Apparently “Culturally Responsive teaching is an approach that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using culturally referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes “ according to Gloria Ladson- Billings.



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