

The Impact of Culture on a Child's Learning

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**How can teachers promote
cultural infusion in the
classroom?**



Culturally Responsive Education

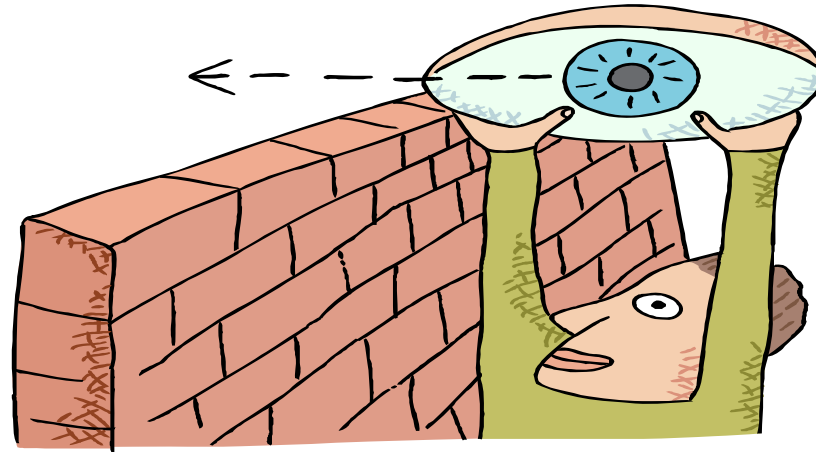


Culturally Responsive Education Recognizes and Addresses :

- 1. Student's learning styles**
- 2. The different modes of reflective learning**
- 3. The role of group collaboration**
- 4. The function of non-verbal behavior**

**An individual's
learning style is the
way he or she uses
strategies to
help learn tasks
and organizes
information**

- **Some students are visual learners**



- **Meaning there is an emphasis on visual strategies and mental representations for processing information**

- **Others learn most effectively within small groups that focus on hands-on learning**



- **Cooperative learning activities opposed to individual, competitive activities are compatible with a number of Native American groups for example**

With respect to learning styles, be aware:

Just because a child does not respond to a question, does not mean they do not know the answer.

Their silence may be interpreted as noncompliant, non-attentive or disrespectful.



Misinterpretation of a child's actions can put a child at risk for an inappropriate referral to special education.

Navajo and Apache children for example are not likely to respond to a question if it appears they are trying to compete with their peers

How does this translate into the classroom



- **Traditional teaching methods are culturally insensitive.**
- **What is taught in typical teacher preparation courses is not the best approach.**
- **These practices can jeopardize or hinder a student's learning.**
- **They may cause feelings of rejection, isolation and anxiety.**



- **These things can also cause teachers to feel frustrated and unable to reach their students.**



What can be done to promote cultural infusion in the classroom?

- 1. Teachers should be aware of the learning characteristics of the students they serve to enhance their educational achievement.**

2. Teachers should learn to embrace students' cultural characteristics.

3. Teachers' should become flexible to alter teaching practices in their classrooms

4. A teaching approach that develops group oriented classrooms and avoids focus on individual students can be much more successful

These strategies can enrich education and alleviate fears that relate to loss of group identity, alienation, and anxiety during the learning process



Examples from:

***Teachers' Cultural Knowledge
and Understanding of
American Indian Students
and Their Families:
Impact of Culture on a
Child's Learning***

Practices	Problems	Solutions
<p>Teachers tend to read a story in small segments. They provide some information and then check students' Comprehension With discussions, and questions.</p>	<p>American Indian children are taught to hear all of the information and then come to a conclusion.</p>	<p>Teachers can accommodate the students by exposing them to the entire story or larger segments of the story to allow students to reflect and understand the whole story and its elements.</p>

Practices	Problems	Solutions
Teachers quiz children on new skills they are learning so to assess a child's level of acquisition.	American Indian children are taught to learn through modeling and practice. Children are uncomfortable in demonstrating their skill level until they have reached mastery.	Teachers need to allow students time to privately practice learning the new skill. Teachers can request volunteers to demonstrate. This should be private and not be a public display.

Practices	Problems	Solutions
When teachers ask questions of children in the classroom, they expect a verbal response from The child.	American Indian children are taught to be Comfortable with silence. When a child does not verbally respond to a teacher, the child may be considered rude or incompetent.	Do not publicly address students who are quiet learners. If a student is doing fine in class and chooses not to answer, allow this silent behavior.

Practices	Problems	Solutions
Teachers often have competitions within school activities or assignments to see who the first to get done is or who can do the task the best.	American Indian students are taught to work in unity and to help others for the benefit of the group not solely to benefit his or herself.	Teachers should emphasize Cooperative work assignments as opposed to competitive activities within the classroom.

**What will the
future hold?**



- **Training agencies, in-service delivery, and other teacher preparation programs should focus on using the solutions to the problems discussed in this article**
- **Without this type of attention, we will continue to see high drop out rates, low graduation rates from high school, and a disproportionate over representation of students in special education programs.**

- **This is a critical issue for rural schools.**
- **Rural families have maintained their traditional values and continue to pass these values on.**
- **Their cultural beliefs and values are subtly engrained through teachings and experiences within their family and community systems.**
- **If our education system is culturally unresponsive to these values, the educational impact may be devastating.**

- **Be aware of your students learning styles**
- **Embrace other cultures**
- **Be willing to change**

**EVERYONE
SUCCEEDS!!** 

Information obtained from:

**Teachers' Cultural Knowledge and Understanding
of American Indian Students and Their Families:**

Impact of Culture on a Child's Learning

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