Culturally Relevant Classrooms

Why a culturally relevant classroom is important and how to achieve one

Description of classroom environment and planning	Why?	How?
Environment		
Do your lessons incorporate a variety of learning modalities?	- Increases opportunities for students to learn - Increases engagement - Different modalities will/might resonate with different cultures which leads to more comfort and then more learning	- Addressing one learning target or skill with different methods: - Writing - Computer - Songs - Games - Speaking
Are there established routines to support daily instruction?	- Less time is wasted on explanations because students understand the expectations - Student engagement increases and anxiety decreases because of predictability - Supports independence and combats learned helplessness	- Posted anchor charts - Student-led/initiated experiences - Smooth, flowing schedule - Transition cues are established
Do you have a strong sense of family and community among students in your class?	- Decreases anxiety (and increases possibility of learning) - Give students the ability to face and resolve difficult problems facing our world - Creates mutual respect and understanding - Creates a feeling of safety where students are comfortable taking risks - Allows kids to see their place in the academic community	- Students are accepting of the differences and mistakes of others - Students work as one team to solve problems - Students actively support each other - Teacher models and students use language that demonstrates caring - Community Circles - Students look towards each other for support - Explicit coaching in growth mindset
Do you have visual representation in the room of all cultural groups that are represented within your school?	- Students need to see that they are valued and a contributor to the group - We (teachers, schools, communities) present what we value	- Posters - Photos - Books with characters of different races/cultures - Books/posters in languages spoken in your class/school

Description of classroom environment and planning	Why?	How?
Student Interactions		
Do you greet students at the door and have a room that invites the learner into the space?	● Students feel welcome ● Builds Relationships and routine ● Positive, calm, steady presence ● Starts the morning off on good foot	● Smiling ● Eye Contact ● Monthly greeting in native languages ● Check in with students ● Secret handshake with each kid
Are you aware of the diversity of students within your class (e.g., ELL, special education, gifted/ talented, race, ethnicity)?	● Meet their needs ● Makes students feel valued by what they are bringing to the classroom ● Celebrate diversity ● Open to learning about others	● ELL, TAG, and SpEd: School Identification; Modify and differentiate ● Race, Ethnicity: Self-Identification; Facilitate celebrations and diversity
Do you create various groupings to ensure that all students are able to work with a wide variety of partners?	● Learning to work with a variety of people ● Building relationships and community ● Builds communication skills	● Coaching ● Opportunities ● Practice ● Explicit Teaching
Do you use a variety of high-engagement strategies to vary your instruction style?	● Learning is motivating	● Choice ● Variety
Are there multiple entry points for a student to process content and clarify misconceptions?	● Kids learn differently ● Students have learning preferences ● Increases engagement	● Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing incorporated in every lesson ● "I do", "We do", "You do" ● Gradual release of instruction
Do students have the encouragement and support to succeed in class, even if they initially fail?	● Teach students how to respond to mistakes (which are inevitable)	● Explicitly teach mindsets "self-talk" ● Focus on strengths--10:1 pos/neg ● Class community--learn from mistakes
Do you encourage students to work collaboratively in the majority of class activities?	● Students come from other cultures that are more collective, rather than individualistic ● Builds job skills ● Builds life skills ● We need collaborative efforts to solve significant world problems	● Partner talk ● Group collaboration ● Less teacher talk, more student sharing ● Desk arrangement ● Team role posters
Do you regularly spend instructional time creating a safe learning environment?	● Students need to feel safe before they can learn	● Circle time ● Revisit Norms ● Mistakes celebration board ● Modeling acceptance ● Conflict is addressed

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Instruction		
Do you begin class instruction with an Essential Question and overview of the day's learning?	● Increase engagement ● Builds community ● Clarifies learning	● Present learning target as a question ● Refer to the question throughout the lesson
Are you a facilitator of learning, rather than a presenter?	● Teacher is not the only holder of knowledge ● Engaging kids ● Value all voices	● Student talk is intentionally planned for and incorporated ● Variety of questions: higher level vs. simplistic
Do you use multiple ways of teaching classroom content?	● Increase engagement and learning ● Different learning styles	● Variety of materials: video, media, art, hands-on, music, etc.
Do you incorporate multidisciplinary concepts (e.g., the arts, music, literature, physical movement, diverse cultures) into your instructional plans?	● Helps make connections across disciplines ● Build community ● Showcases different talents	● PYP ● Inquiry ● Arts for learning ● Integrated units
Do you provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate understanding of concepts?	● Helps to meet the different learning preferences of students ● Supports engagement and learning	● Open-ended projects ● Multiple entry points for learning ● Encourage students to use home language
Do you allow your students to regularly discuss class topics and clarify understanding with each other?	● Value all voices ● Builds a learning community ● Supports social/collaboration skills	● Student talk ● Every voice heard ● Increase engagement ● Anchor charts to support expectations
Do you have each day planned to ensure that you are meeting the diverse needs of the students within your class?	● Meet all objectives ● Plan for diverse needs: ELL, SpEd, etc. ● All learners are valued	● Encourages engagement ● Flow of lesson ● Written plans ● Materials prepared
Do you regularly reflect on your own assumptions about students, their capabilities, and how you can better support their learning?	● Identify personal bias ● Better support learning and growth of all students	● Identify personal bias ● Data driving instruction and planning

Why? And How? Developed by Teach for Beaverton Clinical Teachers, 2017-2018, Emily Reberry, Andrea Robertson, Elizabeth Haynes, Yanick Mesa, Robin Fong, Sara Jaeger, Kristopher Taft, Tricia Murphy, Krystin Murphy, Amber Burnett, Joanne Sage.

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