

## Chapter 2

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# Teaching a Diversity of Learners

## Overview

This chapter provides the reader with information essential to teaching students with disabilities using culturally responsive approaches in physical education. In the chapter, we discuss student diversity, schools, and the implications for teacher preparation. We also discuss the social construction of diversity and physical education teachers' socio-cultural competencies. In the latter part of the chapter, we focus on teaching a diversity of learners with disabilities through social justice pedagogies. Lastly, we present recommendations for the culturally responsive education of students with and without disabilities.

## Chapter Outline

- Opening Scenario

- Introduction

- Students and Schools at Risk

  - Students who are at risk

  - Students who have high needs

  - High-poverty and persistently low-achieving schools

  - Implications for teacher training

- Social Construction of Diversity Forms

  - Ethnicity

  - Race

  - Gender

  - Culture, religion, and language

  - Sexual orientation

  - Disability

- Social Justice Pedagogies

- Culturally Responsive Teaching and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

- Cultural Awareness

  - Culturally responsive teachers

  - Training culturally responsive teachers

- Chapter Summary

- Review Questions

- Further Readings and Resources

  - Websites

- References

## Behavioral Objectives

After reading the chapter, the student will be able to:

1. Discuss what is meant by the phrase *students and schools at risk for educational failure*. Discuss which students and schools are at risk; and how this might affect a teacher's preparation and pedagogy practice.
2. Discuss the status of physical education in urban and rural schools; also, discuss the implications for physical education programs in preparing teacher candidates.
3. Discuss how one's understanding of student diversity has expanded in studying this chapter.
4. Define conceptually the *social construction* of student diversity.
5. Explain the social construction of ethnicity and race categories, and what each physical education teacher should know about teaching and interacting with students of diverse ethnicities and races.
6. Identify and discuss strategies that teachers can use to reduce or eliminate race logic, racism, and colorism.
7. Explain the social construction of gender and the notion of gender logic
8. Discuss the implications of gender logic in physical education and sport environments; also, discuss how teachers can best promote gender equity.
9. Define *sexual harassment*, and discuss how teachers can best avoid, discourage, or respond to accusations of sexual harassment.
10. Define and discuss the importance of *culture*.
11. Define *cultural dissonance* and discuss what teachers should do to connect with students and to reduce or eliminate cultural dissonance in physical education.
12. Define *sexuality* and *sexual orientation* and explain how teachers can promote safe and equitable learning environments for all children regardless of their sexual orientations.
13. Discuss contemporary philosophies that inform our understanding of disability.
14. Discuss how students' disabilities and cultural norms might influence their behaviors in physical education.
15. Discuss how one's understanding of social justice pedagogy has expanded in studying this chapter.
16. Discuss how one's understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy has expanded in studying this chapter.
17. Identify and discuss important attributes of a culturally relevant teacher.

18. Define *cultural competence* and discuss one's present level of cultural competence and identify areas that could be further developed to advance in teaching students with disabilities.

## Test Questions

### ***True or False***

1. **True or False.** Conceptually, student diversity comprises many socially constructed variables such as ethnicity, race, gender, culture, sexuality and sexual orientation, and ability and disability status.
2. **True or False.** *Social construction* is a theoretical framework that rejects society's historical context and present-day social dynamics in regards to interpretations about an individual's or a group's reality.
3. **True or False.** *Race* refers to the cultural heritage of a particular group of people.
4. **True or False.** Today, the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Education identify five racial categories: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander, Black (not Hispanic), Hispanic (not White), and White (not Hispanic).
5. **True or False.** *Ethnicity* is used to identify and categorize individuals based mostly on visible biological features, and such features as skin color and facial features are always supported by genetic indicators.
6. **True or False.** Traditional *gender logic* is the belief that girls and women are naturally inferior to boys and men in sport and physical activities requiring physical skills and cognitive strategies.
7. **True or False.** *Sexual harassment* is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, expression of sexual intent, or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
8. **True or False.** *Culture* represents beliefs, behaviors, linguistic semantics, practices, and traditions; it cuts across race and ethnicity and is largely associated with socioeconomic status, social positioning, and family histories.
9. **True or False.** *Cultural dissonance* represents a bonding between students and their teacher and occurs most often when the teacher and students are from the same cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or socioeconomic backgrounds.
10. **True or False.** Teachers should embrace and openly express phobias or biases they have toward gay, lesbian or bisexual students. This ensures a psychologically safe and equitable learning environment for all students regardless of sexual orientation.

### ***Multiple Choice***

1. Which of the following is likely *not* to promote gender equity in physical education?

- a. Monitoring feedback and attention to be sure it is spread equitably among boys and girls and among high-, medium-, and low-ability groups.
  - b. Making assumptions about students' abilities or interests based on their gender (e.g., all boys like football and all girls like softball).
  - c. Avoiding dividing or highlighting groups based on gender (e.g., boys vs. girls; boys on this line, girls on that line).
  - d. In games that require a high-profile position (e.g., quarterback in football), making sure that *all* students are given opportunities to learn and play all positions.
2. What are *risk ratios*?
- a. *Risk ratios* are mathematical calculations that show that, for every 100 individuals tested, about 68% fall in the middle of the normal curve designated as +1 to -1 standard deviations from 0, the mean (average score) for the group.
  - b. *Risk ratios* are used to compare the proportion of a particular racial/ethnic group served under IDEA to the proportion served among the other racial/ethnic groups combined.
  - c. *Risk ratios* are values that indicate the percentage of a particular racial/ethnic group's distribution that is equal to or below a particular score.
  - d. *Risk ratios* are estimates indicating how a child's scores on a standardized test relate to her or his ethnic/racial group's scores.
3. A teacher should do which of the following in striving to close cultural gaps and reduce *cultural dissonance*?
- a. Make assumptions about students' and their parents' intelligence, values, and other attributes based on their socioeconomic status.
  - b. Learn about the history and experiences of diverse groups, visit students' families and communities, and learn about successful teachers in diverse settings.
  - c. Identify and take a stance on political and religious issues that may be controversial.
  - d. Ignore students who make homophobic remarks, tease their peers, or tell inappropriate jokes.
4. Which statement does *not* reflect an essential component of social justice teaching?
- a. It comprises those curricula, pedagogies, and teachers' expectations and interactional styles that will improve the learning opportunities of each individual student.
  - b. It includes the transformation of any educational structures or policies that diminish students' learning opportunities.

- c. It promotes structural inequities in schools and supports hegemonic policies that adversely affect student learning.
  - d. It challenges students to envision themselves as active citizens with the power to transform unjust structures.
- 5. Which statement *best* describes culturally responsive pedagogy?
  - a. It is an approach to teaching that allows teachers to use each student's prior knowledge and lived experiences to educate and positively affect all students in a holistic manner.
  - b. It is a curriculum model that lends itself well to teaching students self- and social responsibility through cooperative learning in the context of sport.
  - c. It is a curriculum model that emphasizes teacher-centered educational experiences.
  - d. It is a psychodynamic behavior management approach that facilitates conflict resolution.
- 6. Which statement *contradicts* socially just teaching?
  - a. Learn to embrace any ethnocentric views one may have stemming from a dominant social hegemony.
  - b. Become culturally literate (e.g., learn cultural traditions) and regularly include various cultural practices in relevant activities.
  - c. Have a *no tolerance policy* concerning disability-related stereotypical phrases or demeaning remarks such as "you are a retard."
  - d. Have a *no tolerance policy* for bullying, negative stereotypes, and racist, homophobic, or sexist comments.
- 7. Culturally responsive teaching has which of the following components?
  - a. It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.
  - b. It builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities.
  - c. It teaches students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages.
  - d. All of the above are components of culturally responsive teaching.
- 8. Research shows which of the following regarding culturally responsive teachers?
  - a. They communicate low expectations toward ethnic minority students, particularly those who are at risk of educational failure.
  - b. They avoid linking classroom content to students' lived experiences.
  - c. They organize learning as a social event, rather than as a competitive or individual experience.

- d. They avoid incorporating aspects of students' home and cultural communication patterns in their teaching.
9. Which statement is *false* about cultural awareness?
- a. Cultural awareness means a teacher is alert to, acknowledges, and shows an appreciation for various cultures.
  - b. The three progressive stages of cultural awareness move from *culturally unaware* to a *transitional stage* and then onto *cultural resistance*.
  - c. Teachers who are culturally aware are responsive to the distinctions between the cultural capital of the students and the school.
  - d. Teachers who are culturally aware are able to integrate students' languages and cultures in the teaching and learning process by using a variety of teaching strategies appropriate for their diverse classes.
10. In order to create culturally responsive physical education programs, teachers must do which of the following?
- a. Recognize their ethnocentric assumptions and biases and strive to acquire cultural content knowledge in terms of student diversity.
  - b. Understand the broader social, economic, and political context of schools.
  - c. Acquire competence and a will to implement culturally appropriate management strategies and commit to building caring and interactive classes.
  - d. All of the above are components necessary in creating a culturally responsive physical education program.

### **Short Answer**

1. Discuss what is meant by the phrase: *students and schools at risk for educational failure*. Discuss which students and schools are at risk; and how this might affect a teacher's preparation and pedagogy practice.
2. Discuss the status of physical education in urban and rural schools, and the implications for teaching physical education in such schools.
3. Discuss the implementation of various social justice pedagogies such as the conceptions of culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching.

### **Class Assignment**

Have students visit a local school that is considered a high-poverty and/or a persistently low-achieving school to talk with physical education teachers about their experiences, rewards, and challenges.

## **Answer Key**

### ***True or False***

1. **True** [p. 34, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph; p. 34–44]
2. **False** [p. 42, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph]
3. **False** [p. 34, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph]
4. **True** [p. 35, 1<sup>st</sup> complete paragraph]
5. **False** [p. 34, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph]
6. **True** [p. 36, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph]
7. **True** [p. 38, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph]
8. **True** [p. 38, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph]
9. **False** [p. 40, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph]
10. **False** [p. 42, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph]

### ***Multiple Choice***

1. **b** [p. 36–37, Exhibit 2.4]
2. **b** [p. 30, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph]
3. **b** [p. 40–41, Exhibit 2.7]
4. **c** [p. 44–46, Exhibit 2.10]
5. **a** [p. 46–47]
6. **a** [p. 45, Exhibit 2.10; p. 47, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph]
7. **d** [p. 46, bulleted list]
8. **c** [p. 48, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph]
9. **b** [p. 47, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph]
10. **d** [p. 50–51]

### ***Short Answer***

1. The answer can be found on pages 30–33.
2. The answer can be found on pages 32–33.
3. The answer can be found on pages 46–50.