

Chapter 2

Teaching a Diversity of Learners

Chapter Overview

- ▶ Students and schools at risk
 - ▶ Social construction of diversity forms
 - ▶ Social justice pedagogies
 - ▶ Culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy
 - ▶ Cultural awareness
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Students with High Needs and at High Risk Educationally

- ▶ Living in poverty
 - ▶ Far below grade level
 - ▶ At risk of not graduating with a regular high school diploma on time
 - ▶ Homeless
 - ▶ In foster care
 - ▶ Formerly incarcerated
 - ▶ English learners
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Students Receiving Special Education and Related Services by Race/Ethnicity (Fall 2005)

- The percentage of students who received special education and related services (i.e., risk index) was largest for American Indian/Alaska Native (13.8%), followed by Black (12.4%); White (8.6%); Hispanic (8.4%); and Asian/Pacific Islander (4.7%) students.
- American Indian/Alaska Native and Black students were more likely to be served under IDEA than all other racial/ethnic groups combined (1.5 times more likely); Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and White students were less likely to be served under IDEA than all other racial/ethnic groups combined (0.5, 0.9, and 0.9, respectively).
- For American Indian/Alaska Native students, the largest risk ratio was for learning disabilities (1.8 times more likely to receive special education and related services than all other racial/ethnic groups combined) and deaf-blindness (1.7 times more likely).
- For Asian/Pacific Islander students, the largest risk ratios were for autism (1.3 times more likely to receive special education and related services than all other racial/ethnic groups combined) and hearing impairments (1.2 times more likely).
- For Black students, the largest risk ratios were for intellectual disabilities (2.86 times more likely to receive special education and related services than all other racial/ethnic groups combined) and emotional disturbance (2.28 times more likely).
- For Hispanic students, the largest risk ratios were for hearing impairments (1.28 times more likely to receive special education and related services than all other racial/ethnic groups combined) and specific learning disabilities (1.17 times more likely).
- White students were 1.5 times more likely to receive special education and related services for other health impairments than all other racial/ethnic groups combined, 1.33 times more likely to receive special education and related services for autism and 1.21 times more likely to receive special education and related services for traumatic brain injury.

Issues in High-Poverty, Low-Performing Schools

- ▶ Budget concerns
- ▶ Insufficient equipment and supplies
- ▶ Inadequate facilities
- ▶ Overcrowded classes
- ▶ Worsening school infrastructures
- ▶ High percentages of poor students who perform lower on standardized tests than suburban students
- ▶ Limited parental involvement
- ▶ High dropout rates

Adapted PE Issues in High-Poverty, Low-Performing Schools

- ▶ Gymnasium:
 - Use
 - Time allocation
 - Size
 - ▶ Equipment availability and adequacy
 - ▶ Large caseloads and class sizes
 - ▶ Lack of professional development opportunities
 - ▶ Travel demands
 - ▶ Lack of respect and disregard by some colleagues
 - ▶ Attitudes/behaviors of some teacher aides
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Socially Constructed Variables for Developing Cultural Competency

- ▶ Ethnicity
 - ▶ Race
 - ▶ Gender
 - ▶ Culture
 - ▶ Sexuality and sexual orientation
 - ▶ Ability/disability status
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Your Thoughts About Being a Culturally Responsive Teacher

- ▶ Think about this quote:

“It is important to prepare teachers by requiring a broad base of cultural knowledge and culturally responsive teaching strategies.” — Harrison, Carson, and Burden 2010, p. 194

- ▶ What does being *culturally responsive* mean to you?
 - ▶ Do you think you’ll be able to be responsive to students who have a background different from yours?
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Culturally Responsive Teachers and Students of Diverse Ethnicities/Races

- ▶ Do not assume ethnic/racial identity is based on physical attributes alone.
 - ▶ Do not make assumptions based on race or ethnicity.
 - ▶ Ask students how to pronounce their name (if necessary).
 - ▶ Get to know students as individuals.
 - ▶ Use visual aids/demonstrations to help non-English speakers.
 - ▶ Ensure that posters and other visual aids depict diversity and do not stereotype.
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Race Logic

- ▶ Belief that a link exists between:
 - The color of a person's skin, and
 - Physical activity and sports-related skills

Culturally Responsive Teachers and Reducing Colorism/Racism

- ▶ Encourage students to embrace differences in skin tone and other superficial human features.
 - ▶ Help all students feel good about themselves, their heritage, and their physical appearance.
 - ▶ Make sure that students know about different nationalities and countries of origins.
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Promoting Gender Equity in Physical Education (Cruz & Petersen, 2011)

- ▶ Do not make gender-based assumptions.
 - ▶ Monitor feedback and attention to be sure it is spread equally between boys and girls and among all abilities.
 - ▶ Avoid dividing groups based on gender.
 - ▶ Make sure all students have opportunities to play all positions in sports and games.
 - ▶ Encourage students to work in both same-gender and mixed groups.
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Culturally Responsive Teachers and Economically Disadvantaged Students

- ▶ Keep extra supplies (e.g., sneakers, socks, T shirts) for students who may need them.
- ▶ If there is any computer-based homework, make sure that students have access to a school or library computer (if they don't have one at home).
- ▶ Do not make assumptions based on socioeconomic status.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for free physical activity (organized and unorganized) before and after school.



Culturally Responsive Teachers and Diverse Religious/Political Beliefs

- ▶ Do not assume that all students have an espoused religious preference.
 - ▶ Understand the various religions in your school.
 - ▶ Avoid taking a stand on political or religious issues.
 - ▶ Consider changes that would allow Muslim girls to participate without boys.
 - ▶ Establish an environment of mutual respect.
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Culturally Responsive Teachers and Closing Cultural Gaps

- ▶ Learn the history and experiences of diverse groups.
 - ▶ Visit students' families and communities.
 - ▶ Visit or read about successful teachers in diverse settings.
 - ▶ Develop an appreciation of diversity.
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Culturally Responsive Teachers and Students with Special Education Needs

- ▶ Use “person-first” language.
 - ▶ Plan to accommodate everyone in activities.
 - ▶ Talk directly to the student, not to an aide or interpreter.
 - ▶ Accept a student’s right to refuse help.
 - ▶ When speaking to a student in a wheelchair, be at eye level; don’t look down at the student.
 - ▶ Remember that the disability is only one aspect of the student as a person.
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Components of Socially Just Teaching (Chubbuck, 2010)

- ▶ Items to improve learning opportunities for all students:
 - Curricula
 - Pedagogies
 - Teachers' expectations and interactional styles
 - ▶ Transformation of structures or policies that diminish learning opportunities
 - ▶ Looking beyond the school to transform any structures at the societal level that perpetuate injustice
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Guidelines for Creating High-Quality, Socially Just PE Programs

- Listen carefully to students with disabilities while seeking to gain an understanding of their messages.
- Examine your own preexisting beliefs about students with various disabilities and determine in what ways such beliefs might affect your expectations and interactions with such students.
- Become culturally competent and responsive practitioners. For all students, seek an understanding and appreciation for the interaction style(s), cultural norms, customs, traditions, common foods, and dominant language(s) of family and peers used in the homes and communities.
- Establish positive home–school relationships with the parents, guardians, or caretakers of all students including those whose cultures differ from your own and of students with disabilities.
- Be consistent in relating to students from diverse backgrounds to build trust between you and your students.
- Learn and pronounce students' names accurately; reward and praise students' positive efforts and hold students to high, yet appropriate, expectations.
- Become culturally literate (e.g., learn cultural traditions) and regularly include various cultural practices in relevant activities.
- Have a *no tolerance policy* concerning disability-related stereotypical phrases or demeaning remarks, such as “you are a retard.”
- Have a *no tolerance policy* for bullying, negative stereotypes, and racist, homophobic, or sexist comments. Use any instances of such behavior to reemphasize social responsibility and encourage cooperation among and between diverse groups.
- Be mindful that you communicate messages in verbal and nonverbal ways (e.g., facial expressions); thus, avoid instances of exhibiting negative body language toward any particular student, including those with disabilities.
- Seek equal close proximity, at random, yet distributed across both female and male students with and without disabilities during instruction, practices, and demonstrations.
- Listen attentively and respond respectfully to students with and without disabilities in positive and constructive ways.

General Ideas for Teaching Diverse Students

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS SHOULD

- Use effective teaching strategies that promote high levels of active participation for all students, with particular attention given to structured learning experiences for students with attention deficits, learning disabilities, hyperactivity disorder, and intellectual disabilities.
- Use peer partners, reduce waiting lines, and ensure that all students have their own piece of equipment (as applicable). Also use transitional activities and embrace culturally diverse forms of music for enhanced motivation and fun.
- Use questioning techniques that promote critical thinking processes as they relate to lesson content and movement behaviors, while interacting with students who have attention deficits, learning disabilities, hyperactivity disorder, and intellectual disabilities.
- Provide students with praise and reinforcement as appropriate, making sure it is equitable between students regardless of ability.
- Comment on students' inappropriate behaviors and provide critical feedback for all students on their skill performance, regardless of ethnic and cultural differences or disability type.
- Provide variety and choice in lesson content in recognition of students' diverse cultures and home lives and to promote decision-making in students with disabilities regarding the activities in which they are most motivated to participate.
- Develop an awareness of female and male students' interaction patterns in physical education, and structure activities to promote cooperation and interaction among these diverse groups and between students with and without disabilities.

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More Ideas for Teaching Diverse Students

- Analyze instructional resources to ensure historical accuracy in the depictions of different cultural, ethnic, and disability groups (including the historical contributions of individuals with learning disabilities, for example, or the cultural norms of the deaf community).
- Help students with disabilities stay on-task. For example, a teacher might create suspense by pausing before asking questions. Checking for understanding with group-alerting strategies is particularly effective for students with attention deficits and hyperactivity disorder.
- Randomly select different students to answer questions so the students cannot time their attention.
- Mention that different students at random are going to be called upon to answer questions.
- Use the name of the student with disability in a question or in the material being covered. This will improve their attention.
- Ask simple questions (not necessarily related to the topic at hand) to a student whose attention is beginning to wander.
- Use affirmative praise and positive personalized phrases to help develop a personal bond with the student who has a disability and use these affirmations to invoke attentiveness and cooperation from the student.

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More Ideas for Teaching Diverse Students

- Move throughout the learning environment regularly and at random, while also finding opportunities to stand close to a student who starts to exhibit signs of inattentiveness and touch him or her on the shoulder while continuing to teach and manage the class as a whole.
- Decrease the length of tasks or lesson activities, particularly for students with attention deficits, learning disabilities, hyperactivity disorder, and intellectual disabilities, while alternating or combining physical and mental activities.
- Increase the novelty of lessons by using films, tapes, flash cards, or small group work, or by having a student call on others.
- Incorporate the students' interests into a lesson plan.
- Structure in some guided reflection and relaxation time, and teach students self-monitoring strategies.
- Give simple, concrete instructions once and use a clear and confident voice in giving instructions and managing student behaviors.
- Use peer tutors. These might be same-age, cross-cultural, or older students; or volunteer parents.

Your Viewpoint

- ▶ In your opinion, should physical education teacher education (PETE) programs help ensure that teacher candidates are culturally responsible? How so?
 - ▶ What, in your opinion, is culturally relevant pedagogy?
 - ▶ What defines a culturally relevant teacher?
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