

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Reflection in Higher Education: Promising Practices from the Cultural Literacy Curriculum Institute

Edited by Sharlene Voogd Cochrane, Meenakshi Chhabra, Marjorie A. Jones & Deborah Spragg (2017). 125 pages, ISBN: 9781138240544. \$56

Subject: How to be a better teacher

Useful for: Useful for instructors who want to build a more inclusive curriculum and learning environment for their students.

Format: Chapters with index, with questions for reflection at the end of each chapter, and reflective exercises included at the end with prompts for group discussion.

Reviewer's Comments:

The profession and the institutions that we support are diversifying. Whether we are educating in the classroom or at another point of need, we owe it to our students and our colleagues to support, foster, and encourage diversity by providing instruction that is inclusive.

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Reflection in Higher Education provides a series of essays from instructors and academics from varied disciplines and programs about their own experiences and practices for recognizing personal bias, acknowledging and valuing the experience of others, and creating an inclusive praxis for engaging students and community.

The essays begin with a section from white academics who share the work they have done in examining and recognizing their own bias and experiences of difference. Contributors explore how their backgrounds influence and shape their classroom practices, share the experience of trying to build social awareness projects within a campus community, and grapple with the transition between class identities as a first generation academic.

The second section explores the experiences of academics of color and their allies in developing cultural awareness and competency through instruction. The essays focus on seizing the opportunities for teachable moments that arise from sharing their own identities with less diverse student bodies in primarily white institutions, and by encouraging open and reflective discussion to build trust and self-awareness in the classroom.

The third section brings together strategies for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices. From building cultural awareness of student backgrounds and experience and how those factors shape learning, to creating a safe space for adult learners to share their experience and vulnerability, these essays provide real-world examples of culturally-inclusive practices employed by instructors and anecdotal analysis of past successes and challenges.

This collection of essays is a gentle introduction to the language and experiences central to diversity discourse and praxis, focusing on a reflection-first approach to evaluating and then dismantling white fragility. The personal narrative structure provides a point of reference and empathy for people new to examining bias critically and would make this a useful read for

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diversity and inclusion programs where buy-in is low due to resistance to new ideas. The included reflective exercises at the end of each essay are built-in to provide discussion and collaborative learning opportunities.

Reviewed by: Abby Deese, Emory Law, in 2018.