Exploring the Components of a Culturally Responsive Faculty Development Program

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Recommended Citation

Implementing a Culturally Responsive Faculty Development Program

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Abstract: One method of aiding educators in becoming culturally responsive is faculty development. In this session, the presenter examines the creation and implementation of a culturally responsive faculty development program.

Keywords: culturally responsive, faculty development, diversity

Background

The rising enrollments of native and international students of color are changing the population demographics of predominantly White institutions of higher education in the United States (Hussar & Bailey, 2016). These demographic shifts have resulted in a greater concern for diversity and its impact on teaching and learning. The rapid growth of populations of color in these institutions impact the direction of programs, policies and teaching approaches within the learning environment (Patton, Renn, Guido, Quaye & Forney, 2016; Richards, Brown & Forde, 2007). As these institutions of higher education diversify, the challenges associated with teaching diverse students tend to rise (Smith, 2015; Colbert, 2010; Haviland & Rodriguez-Kiino, 2009).

These challenges are especially prevalent in classrooms where the teaching styles of faculty may be incompatible with their students' learning styles (Donkor, 2011). Most professors teach from a Eurocentric paradigm without considering the learning needs of students from different cultural backgrounds. This one-style-fits-all method excludes and marginalizes some students, causing them to suffer academically. However, students have a greater motivation to learn when professors integrate their sociocultural viewpoints into their classrooms (Karataş & Oral, 2015). Consequently, it is vital for educators to understand their identities, examine their own understanding and beliefs, and endeavor to grasp the context within which they are teaching.

Considering the highly diverse student population and the dominant White population that exists in academia today, it is imperative that professors of all backgrounds adopt culturally responsive pedagogy due to the negative impact that hegemonic Eurocentric ideologies can have on marginalized students. Professors therefore should reflect upon not only the way in which they teach, but also consider the underlying messages and assumptions in their curriculum, or risk undermining educational equity and promotion of the dominant ideology that is prominent in mainstream education.

One method of aiding educators in becoming culturally responsive is faculty development. Professional development has the highest potential to enhance basic pedagogical practice and competence among educators (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006). Organized professional development is indispensable for collaboration and communication in the creation of inclusive, culturally responsive classrooms (Salend, 2008). However, professional development that focuses on culturally responsive teaching is often reduced to a single training session or a special event held during a specific week or month reserved for cultural celebrations. These individual

training sessions can be beneficial but they can lose the desired impact if not sustained over a period of time (Boyle, Lamprianou & Boyle, 2005).

Purpose

The purpose of this round table is to discuss efforts the author has made to create a culturally responsive faculty development program for the faculty of her institution, an urban community college with total enrollment of over 60,000 students. The college is the most numerically diverse institution of higher learning in the United States; approximately 85 percent of enrollees are students of color and over 150 nations are represented amongst the student population. The author will discuss the framework, implementation, challenges and future plans of culturally responsive faculty training at her community college.

Implications for Theory and Practice

It is anticipated, through this roundtable, academics and practitioners can engage in a healthy discussion regarding the creation and implementation of culturally responsive faculty development programs. The presenter hopes this roundtable inspires ideas for culturally responsive faculty development programs as well as future research on culturally responsive faculty development.

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