ESOL, Multicultural Education, and Cultural Issues
Syllabus

Course Description

This course provides an in depth discussion of the concept of culture and helps teachers and school personnel recognize the influence of culture on learning, communication, belief systems and value orientations, and patterns of thinking and behaving. Opportunities for instructional application, including creating an appropriate learning environment and/or curriculum and materials for culturally diverse students, will be provided.

Competencies

Course participants will:
1. Participate in a collegial multicultural learning community and develop strategies for creating/continuing such a community in schools and classrooms;
2. Study culture from a variety of sources, including readings, lectures, guest visits, visits to cultural events and resource organizations, interviews with informants, and multi-media sources;
3. Develop strategies to promote culturally and linguistically responsive classrooms, including:
   • Adapting curriculum to meet the needs of diverse students;
   • Selecting culturally responsive materials;
   • Adapting classroom language, activities, and tasks to include learners of English;
   • Adapting the classroom physical and social environments to include learners of English; and
   • Building connections among the home, school, and community;
4. Demonstrate reflective teaching; adapt/create lessons to be more culturally responsive. Through this competency, candidates will also demonstrate their competence in reading, writing, listening, and speaking;
5. Collect and use a repertoire of culturally-appropriate teaching techniques useful for language learners in the areas of oral language development, transitions to print, reading and writing for purpose, integration of content, and use of technology, including video, audio, print, electronic mail, and multimedia software;

6. Apply those strategies to adapting grade-level, content-area instruction to include culturally and linguistically different students, and evaluate these applications;

7. Use technological tools to conduct research about a target culture;

8. Assess potential for computer software, networking arenas, and published materials applicable and culturally appropriate for language and content-area learning of ESOL students; use and assess the use of software in classrooms.

Materials

All materials are accessed via the CaseNEX website http://www.casenex.com using the PIN provided and the user name/password you create.

All readings listed can be found by going to the Virtual Library and looking under the case you are reading that session. When pdf files are linked, we recommend printing them for easier reading.

If you do not have the following software, please download each from the given sites. You will find detailed instructions under the ‘Tutorials’ link.


Cases Used

- Columbus, New Mexico
- Culture and Communications Resource Center
- Newcomers’ High
- Park View
- Project Cape Town
- What’s Happening
Course Schedule

Typical course sessions run from Sunday morning through Saturday at midnight. Specific session dates may be found by clicking on Syllabus on the top menu bar. Course participants should read both the case and assigned readings prior to joining the online discussion. Participation in the discussion should be ongoing throughout each course session. For typical courses, final discussion postings, journals, and workbook assignments are due by Saturday at midnight unless otherwise noted. Please see the News Flash for any alterations of the course schedule posted by your instructor.
Introductory Session
Exploring the CaseNEX Site

Complete these tasks prior to the beginning of Session 1.

Readings

Read the “Course Tutorial” linked from the TUTORIAL menu, paying special attention to the Case-Analysis and Workbook Assignment Rubrics. These rubrics will be used by your instructor throughout the course to evaluate your Journal entries, Discussion responses, and Workbook Assignments where appropriate.

Discussion

Post one entry introducing yourself to your classmates. You may choose to describe your professional background and experience, relevant personal information, or why you are taking this course. (100 words or fewer)

Journal

What do you find inspiring and challenging about your work with students from cultures other than yours? (100 words or fewer)

Note

Use CaseMail to send a note to your instructor stating that you will be taking this course. To do so, click on CaseMail on the top menu bar and then ‘Click here to create a new message.’ Use the marked link to look up an address. Continue linking down until you see the class list. Click on the instructor’s name and then compose your message and hit ‘Post Message.’
Session 1
Understanding Culture

Case
What’s Happening?

Readings
- US Census Bureau Projections of the Resident US Population by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Nativity
- US Census Bureau Projections of State Populations, by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin
- US Census Bureau Poverty Data
- Cultural and non-cultural aspects of non-verbal communication
- Various articles under the “Understanding Culture” section of the Culture and Communications Resource Center

Discussion

Focus on Scene Five from this session’s case. How might the communication norms of the respective cultures of the students and teacher play a part in the dynamics of their interaction? Explore the perspectives of each and any misinterpretations they might have had due to differences in nonverbal communication norms. Propose actions the teacher might have taken to minimize these misinterpretations. What might be the consequences of your proposed actions? Remember to revisit the discussion during the session to read and respond to your classmates’ postings.

Journal

Respond to one of the following:

- Using the Census readings as a starting point, reflect upon the ways your district, school, and classroom demographics compare to national and state figures. Offer your perspective on the similarities and differences between cultural groups, focusing particular attention on your current or most recent students.

- Focusing on one cultural group currently represented within your class or school, describe any surprises you encountered in this session’s readings along with any issues that were highlighted. How might the knowledge from the readings help inform your interactions with these students?
Workbook

Exploring Cultures

Select one cultural group to explore. The group you select will be the basis of Workbook assignments throughout this course. Complete research on two of the following socializing agents: family, school, church, community, neighborhood, peer group, sports, arts, technology, workplace, print media, and/or electronic media.

Research two socializing agents of the cultural group. Post the following:

- Research summaries for each of the two socializing agents.
- Reflections on ways your findings may inform your instructional decisions. This assignment is due by the end of Session 2.

Note

Check your CaseMail (linked from top menu bar) and News Flash (on the right when you login) for notes from your instructor every time you log on to the site.
Session 2

Exploring Our Own Views of Culture

Case
What’s Happening
Project Cape Town

Readings
• Bridging Cultures in Our Schools: New Approaches That Work (focus on the Applying the Framework section)
• Diversity, Learning Style and Culture
• Language, Diversity, and Learning: Lessons for Education in the 21st Century
• Learning Styles Across Cultures

Discussion
Focus on your knowledge of individualism versus collectivism as presented in the Bridging Cultures reading. In the Project Cape Town case, how does the music teacher’s cultural heritage shape her understanding of her students’ musical interests and talents? What might be the positive and negative consequences of the interactions of these two cultures? Aside from the more obvious musical differences, how else might their different approaches to individualism, collectivism, community, and learning manifest themselves in the school setting? What actions might the teacher take in order to address these issues positively?

Journal
Reflect on your comfort level working with students from cultures other than your own. Are there certain cultural groups you find easier to relate to? Which cultural groups do you find more difficult to work with? What are some of the factors that may influence your perspective? Consider the information on learning styles (your own and various cultural groups) versus stereotypes presented in Learning Styles Across Cultures as you frame your response.

Workbook

Exploring Cultures due by the end of this session.
Session 3
Understanding Connections between School and Home Cultures

Case
Project New Delhi

Readings
- Bridging Cultures in Our Schools: New Approaches That Work (focus on Introduction and A Practical Framework for Understanding Cultural Differences sections)
- To Meet Your Students Where They Are, First You Have to Find Them: Working With Culturally and Linguistically Diverse At-Risk Students
- Keys to Success for Bilingual Students with Limited Formal Schooling
- Helping Middle School and High School Aged Learners Achieve Academic Success

Discussion
What issues might a student from the Katha School face upon transferring to Bal Bharati? What issues might students from both schools face upon moving to the United States? How might their perspectives compare? Which issues should be considered when determining grade placement for them and students like them? What considerations need to be made when dealing with students with limited or interrupted schooling? When responding to your classmates’ postings, be sure to speculate about the consequences that might arise from the placement recommendations they’ve offered.

Journal
From your perspective as a school professional, to what extent is it true that success in school means loss of a student’s native culture? Reflect upon the same question from the perspectives of several of your students and their families. What does this say about the way schools are structured, and what are some actions schools might take to address these issues?

Workbook
None this session
Session 4  
Fine Tuning Teacher Expectations

Case  
Columbus, New Mexico

Readings  
• Look, Question and Listen: A Cultured View of Spoken English Learning  
• What Does It Mean To Be Culturally Proficient?  
• Promoting Educators’ Cultural Competence to Better Serve Culturally Diverse Students  
• Culturally Proficiency: Tools for School Leaders

Discussion  
If you were a teacher at Columbus Elementary School, how would you adjust your parent/community interactions to match the needs of that school community? Draw upon specific knowledge from the case to support your suggested actions. Which of the suggestions offered by your classmates during the discussion might be appropriate to your current school situation?

Journal  
Respond to one of the following:

• Reflect upon a recent interaction you had with an ELL’s family. If you do not have any ELLs in your class, reflect on a recent interaction with a student’s family from a cultural group other than your own. Apply knowledge gained so far in this course to analyze the interaction, identify any misinterpretations, and propose remedies for your next encounters.

• Compare and contrast some tenets of your own culture (view of education, parent-teacher relationship, child-rearing, group vs. independent work, etc) with a different culture represented in your school. What might be the consequences of these different perspectives from a teacher’s point of view?

• Imagine that for a week out of this year you will become a member of another cultural or ethnic group. Which group would
you choose to be part of for that week? Why? What is one value from that culture or ethnic group that attracts you to it? Is there anything about that culture or ethnic group that concerns or frightens you? Name one concrete way in which you think your life would be different if you were from that ethnic or cultural group? (This is from the appendix to chapter 3 of Developing Cross-Cultural Competence)

**Workbook**

None this session
Session 5
Building Community within the School and Classroom

Case
Newcomers’ High

Readings
- Communication Strategies for All Classrooms
- Facing Up to Stereotypes in the Second Language Classroom
- Multicultural Awareness Issues for Academic Advisors
- How to support ELL Students with Interrupted Formal Schooling
  Milton J. Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)
- Diversity in the Classroom: Understanding Differences in a Global Society

Discussion
Focusing on the Newcomers’ High case, what actions do the teachers in that school take to help students develop shared values and create a climate of openness, mutual respect, support, and inquiry? Based upon your own professional knowledge, knowledge you’ve gained in this course and the information presented in the case, what would you suggest they do next to facilitate communication and collaboration in order to address these goals further?

Journal
This session’s Multicultural Awareness article states, “We need to begin by recognizing that each of us views the world through the lens of our own ethnocentricity.” Reflect upon your background, the lens of your own ethnocentricity and resulting stereotypes, and their affects on your interactions within your school community. Focus on any relevant issues that arise for you, your students, and their families. What actions might you take in the future to address these?

Workbook
Addressing Stereotypes

    Work off of the two discussions from the Facing Up to Stereotypes reading. Plan a lesson, discussion, or other activity about this topic
that targets your grade and class. What piece of literature or media might you select to begin addressing stereotypes with your students? How might you make this complex topic appropriate to the age of your students? What types of questions will you pose? What types of activities might you use to help create a climate of openness, mutual respect, support, and inquiry? How might you follow up on these concepts throughout the year?

Due by the end of this session
Session 6
Building Community Beyond School Walls

Case
Newcomers’ High

Readings
• Why Is Hispanic Parental Involvement a Serious Issue?
• Success with English Learners: Parent Involvement is Essential
• Engaging ELL Families: 20 Strategies for School Leaders
• How to Reach Out to Parents of ELLs

Discussion
What actions suggested in the readings might the faculty members in the Newcomers’ case take to reach out to students’ families? When you respond to each others’ suggestions, speculate about possible consequences to their proposals, including short- and long-term consequences, and possible unintended consequences.

Journal
Apply knowledge gained from the readings and your own professional experience to your current class or school situation. Which actions suggested do you think would be most helpful in involving families in supporting students’ reading development? How might you tailor the suggestions to target your students’ particular needs? How might you tailor them to address cultural diversity within your school community?

Workbook
None this session
Session 7
Shifting Instructional Strategies

Case

What’s Happening?

Culture and Communications Resource Center

Readings

- Articles under the “Instructional Implications” section of the Culture and Communications Resource Center (included with your cases)
- You will engage in online research to support this session’s Workbook Assignment using the CaseNEX Virtual Library and other online resources.
- Multicultural Pavilion
- Steps Toward Multicultural Curriculum Transformation
- Key Characteristics of a Multicultural Education Curriculum

Discussion

In “Key Characteristics of a Multicultural Education Curriculum,” Gorski states that content must acknowledge “the contributions and perspectives of ALL groups.” What does he mean by this statement? In your experience, is this a feasible goal? What challenges are inherent in the prospect of acknowledging the perspectives of all groups? How might these challenges be overcome?

Journal

Describe actions Laura Saatzer (scene 1 in What’s Happening?) might take to engage her students better. Base your recommendations on knowledge from course readings. In which ways might your suggestions for Laura also be appropriate for you and your students?
Workbook Assignment

Designing Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Lessons

This assignment is intended to help you synthesize and apply the concepts and knowledge presented in this course. This Session’s readings are intended to serve as resources for your lesson development along with the other course readings and your own resources. Using them as a guide, design two or more lessons for your students that demonstrate the following:

- Evaluation and adaptation of curricular materials for use with diverse students
- Design of learning activities that encourage students’ effective interpersonal skills across cultures
- Identification of technology resources for use in instruction
- Use of culturally appropriate learning activities that incorporate technology and software, multi-media sources, visits to cultural events and resource organizations, readings, guests, and/or interviews
- Adjustments to assessment materials that address cultural bias.

For each lesson, include the following:

- Grade level/student audience description
- Learning objectives, including state/ Common Core standards
- Materials/resources
- Student grouping strategies
- Procedures
- Student assessment options
- Other modifications/differentiation strategies for supporting language development of ESOL students

Write a concluding summary of how your cultural research from session 1 and 2 may have informed the selection of curricular materials.

Try to teach the lesson and write a summary of ways the lesson
encouraged effective: interpersonal skills across cultures.

This assignment is due at the end of session 8.
Session 8
Fine-Tuning the Curriculum

Case
Park View

Readings
- Preparing ELLs to be 21st-Century Learners
- The ABCs of Website Evaluation
- Multicultural Education and the Internet
- Dave’s ESL Cafe

Discussion

Review the videotaped lessons presented in this session’s case. Using knowledge from this session’s readings, what actions might you suggest the teachers take to use technology to engage students and boost achievement? Make specific recommendations for one of the lessons, citing the readings you found most helpful.

Journal

Describe the educational issues Pilar from Park View describes, both from her perspective as a child and as an educator. What insight do you gain? How might you apply this insight to the issues you face within your own school?

Note

Remember to complete the online course evaluation which can be found under Class Materials on the menu bar.

Workbook Assignment

Designing Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Lessons Assignment due by the end of this Session