

2nd Week Reflection

In the second week, we read and discussed cultural responsiveness, gender, decolonization, and religion in inclusive education. The guest speaker, Dr. Don DeVito, introduced the research focusing on culture responsiveness in Rawlings Elementary Center for Fine Arts in Florida, USA. He emphasizes the goal for educators to help students gaining music-related knowledge, which will help to keep the arts alive in the community. (DeVito, 2020, p.23) Moreover, the curriculum is designed with another layer of understanding through journaling and comprehensive reading to help with students' retaining academic improvement. This comprehensive learning outcome could be seen as evidence to break the stereotype: music as a "non-essential elective course" in school (Nichols, 2013, p.270). Since the students also improved in English, language arts, math, and science high stakes testing implemented to ascertain adequate progress (DeVito, 2020, p.9).

Speaking to cultural relevancy, Dr. DeVito shared Gertrude's teaching story in Heidi. He also mentioned how Gertrude taking care of her students outside of teaching time that echoes what Dr. Bradley and Dr. Benedict have indicated in the lecture, "To build the relationship with students is the first thing, before teaching" which is one of the inspiring points to me. To listen, to build trust, to create a safe space is the key to inclusive education. Also, teachers should carefully watch the common terms/sentences that frequently used in classes. For power dynamic, teachers may say "let's try this together" rather than "I want you to do...."; for gender inclusiveness, we can say names or "everyone" instead of boys and girls, "significant others" rather than boyfriend and girlfriend.

Moreover, Benjamin Leer mentioned in his presentation, saying that he used a survey to provide students with a chance to express their gender identity, also providing teachers with an opportunity to know them better. A survey is a good way that I am planning to try in my future teaching, not only for gender inclusiveness but also for building a decent relationship with students. Like Dr. Ramsay said in the speech, "with trust, teachers will create a safe space for students to open up and focus on learning". In addition, Dr. DeVito mentioned the importance of "trust" in the speech. With trust, he provided students with a chance to perform at the National CEC conference in Florida. Also, he trusts Gertrude and inviting her to participate in research activities and conference presentations regardless of lacking qualification degree. His work with Gertrude not only led to a successful cultural relevancy goal

but also implicate the power of collaboration between educators.

Rie and Ryan's story (Nichols, 2013) expresses the gender issue happening in school from a minority's perspective. Rie arranged for Nichols to meet and speak with important people in her life to get well-rounded information (p.265). It developed a trusting rapport, and also indicated the equal status between them. On the other hand, Allsup (2016) quotes Miller's words (2005):

What I have found is that the admonitions to "tell your story" often lead to..." cheerful" versions of teacher research in which teachers learn about and then implement new pedagogical approaches and curriculum materials without a hitch. (p.211)

Saying that "stories and autobiographies, instead of confusing and definalizing categories, delimit the search for new perspectives" (Allsup, p.52). In my opinion, it is essential to publishing narrative research to express a minority's real life and struggles as a way to make a dominant group hear their voice. This is an essential step to break the barrier. Music educators standing at the front line should be the one who cares about minority's thoughts and take the first step leading the whole community to establish safe schooling and social learning environment. Every research method has pros and cons. What makes it more critical is researchers' motivation to understand the minority's perspective. To analyze, reconsider, take actions, reflect, adjust, then keep trying. As Dr. Bradley said in the lecture, "to be certain about your uncertainty" is the key when encountering with complicated issues.

In addition to the uncertainty, Dr. Bradley encouraged educators to think actively rather than blindly receiving knowledge; always asking "why" before "how" that inspired me with a new way of doing critical thinking and process-based teaching. I will adjust attitude when engaging in open-questions and answers: never intent on convincing or changing people's minds—leaving space for others. On the other hand, I will be transparent about the pedagogical goals to inform the "why" to students and not merely hope that they realize by instinct (Benedict, 2021, p.124). Moreover, it reminds me of cultural barriers. As a group member of a racial minority in Canada, I was hesitated and shy to seek help or ask questions. Recently, I realized that "Do not assume others will know your perspectives by instinct"; most people are friendly and willing to communicate if I moved the first step, and create a chance to understand each other. I appreciated people's kindness and never seen it as a duty or mandatory;

otherwise, this will lead to the same outcome as social justice warriors do. For me, inclusiveness is to respect the differences, be open-minded and embrace the uncertainty with people and life.

Reference

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