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Interrupting the Narrative: Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching

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Title: Interrupting the Narrative: Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching

Audience: Classroom Teachers

Learning Objectives:

1. To define and understand culturally responsive teaching
2. To identify and examine how culturally responsive teaching can create positive academic outcomes for learners and help in closing achievement gaps
3. To review, practice, and create culturally responsive lessons

Session Description:

Educators are tasked with ensuring that all students are academically successful. Current legislation such as the Every Student Succeeds Act provides a continued focus on ensuring that all students have equitable access to quality educational resources and that schools are held accountable for student progress. As classrooms become increasingly diverse, it is vital that educators examine variables that may impact student learning such as culture and lived experiences.

Piaget's theory on cognitive development suggests that the process of assimilation allows students to make connections between existing knowledge and new knowledge as a way to learn new material (Broderick & Blewitt, 2020). A student's existing schema is rooted in their cultural environment. With academic achievement as the goal, teachers should be equipped with the appropriate attitude, knowledge, and skills to understand and support student's needs as they work to continue to close achievement gaps. Effective support of students requires teachers to be culturally relevant in the classroom.

Gay defines Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively (Gay, 2010). It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and used as frames of reference for students, they are

more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly (Gay, 2010). CRT involves a certain mindset that values diversity and multiculturalism, actions that involve social justice and advocacy, and the act of teaching utilizing teaching strategies and techniques that match the diverse learning styles found in the classroom. CRT encompasses a curriculum that allows for meaningful connections between home, community, and school (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

The positive outcomes of culturally responsive teaching on students' academic performance are ever present in the educational literature (Bondy et al., 2013; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010; Howard, 2001; Irvine, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Often achievement gaps are thought of as student deficits and reflects negatively upon underserved populations. CRT allows educators to change the narrative and address achievement gaps through refined instructional strategies. When instruction is created and implemented through a cultural lens students have a greater chance of experiencing success (Mayfield & Garrison-Wade, 2015).

This session is designed to examine the positive impact that culturally responsive teaching has on student outcomes. Educators will examine and challenge their own beliefs about instructional strategies and student learning. Participants will understand culturally responsive teaching and how to effectively implement culturally relevant strategies within the classroom while focusing on successful academic achievement for all learners. It will provide an opportunity for educators to make positive adjustments to how they build relationships, utilize instructional techniques and materials, and foster a positive classroom climate.

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