

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Indigenizing Curriculum

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Description

This 25-page article discusses the impact of an introduction to university course that incorporated the worldviews of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Peoples (FNIM) of Canada. The goal of the course was to support learners emotionally and socially, using culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). The article reports on a longitudinal study that explored the value of the course from the students' perspectives. Participants included eleven women and six men, between the ages of 18 and 56, who identified as FNIM learners.

Salient Points

The curriculum of an introduction to university course for FNIM learners was indigenized using a culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) framework. CRP is a pedagogical framework that "recognizes the rich and varied cultural wealth, knowledge, and skills of diverse learners" (p. 23). It contrasts with conventional Western education which typically emphasizes individuality, competition, linear thinking, and a Eurocentric worldview. Instead, CRP is an inclusive, holistic approach, with a focus on the interconnectivity of different ways learning and knowing, linked on different levels (emotional, social, intellectual, physical).

Semi-structured interviews with participants in the introduction to university course indicated that this approach benefited the learners intellectually, socially, emotionally, and academically. Students found that circles of learning fostered the creation of social relationships and community. They expressed their feelings, gained friends, and developed community. The peer mentoring aspect of the course provided social, emotional and academic support as learners shared lived experiences. Also, meaningful and personal student-teacher relationships were developed, and valued.

Questions for Reflection

As you explore this document, consider the following questions:

- Like the Indigenous learners in the study, many ESL learners experience a discontinuity between their traditional ways of learning and the more Eurocentric and linear educational practices they experience in Canada. That is, there may be an "incongruence" in their cultural background and the culture of the school that they find themselves in. To what extent have you found this to be true of your learners?

- Studies reveal that cultural congruence of classroom practices increase student success in schools (see page 4). Do you think a CRP approach would benefit your learners? How could you apply a culturally responsive pedagogy to your curriculum and classroom practices?
- The learners in the Indigenized university course identified the following as valuable: circles of learning, peer mentoring, and meaningful personal relationships with instructors. Are these pedagogies that could be applied in your context?
- The Indigenized course designed a physical learning space that recognized the diversity of learning styles (see p. 28 for a description of the physical environment of the course). Does your learning space accommodate your learners' diverse learning styles? If not, are there steps you can take to improve that physical space to accommodate learners' needs?

Keywords

Culturally responsive pedagogy, circles of learning, peer mentoring

Reference and Links

Ragoonaden, K., & Mueller, L. (2017). Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Indigenizing Curriculum. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education/Revue canadienne d'enseignement supérieur*, 47(2), pp. 22-46. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1154077.pdf>