

Cultural Knowledge Pedagogy for Higher Education

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Abstract

Pedagogy in higher education curriculum is very important in dealing with students who have different cultures. Since, every individual is unique, so teachers must vary their methods of teaching, content of the lessons and type of evaluation that will fit to the type of learners. Thus, this theoretical and empirical study aimed to analyze the importance of cultural knowledge pedagogy in the higher education of learning particularly in the integration of the 21st century skills. This study focused on how important is the cultural knowledge pedagogy in higher education, the components and strategies of teaching using cultural knowledge across diversity, and the great contribution of using cultural knowledge approach in teaching learners with diverse cultures. The research design used in this study is purely theoretical and empirical design using fifteen articles as the tools in analyzing the results of the study. Based from the thorough analysis of the literature reviews of the articles, findings reveal that cultural knowledge pedagogy is very important in the teaching and learning process for the learners with different cultures. It means that cultural knowledge is a way of demonstrating an openness and willingness to learn about the aspects of culture that are important to students and their families. The great contribution of using cultural knowledge pedagogy is to have culturally responsive classroom management which requires teachers to understand the ways that schools reflect and perpetuate discriminatory practices of the larger society. In conclusion, cultural knowledge pedagogy is a useful strategy for enacting culturally responsive classroom management in the higher education of learning.

Keywords: Cultural Sensitivity, Pedagogy, higher education

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Introduction

In the teaching profession, knowledge across diversity is the answer to the multicultural education. It explains further, that teachers should be knowledgeable enough on the different cultures of the learners because these will be the basis of what pedagogy fits to the types of learners. This means that in the teaching and learning process, teachers as facilitators of learning must possess the knowledge of cultural sensitivity. Thus, the pedagogy of teaching has the integration of cultural dimensions, in order to have culturally responsive pedagogy. So, what is the role of higher education towards culturally responsive pedagogy in the 21st century education? From this challenging question, we argue that knowledge is power. Through knowledge, people become imaginative, creative and innovative through critical thinking skills. Since, higher education is getting into internationalization, this is already the involvement of different people with diverse cultures across the global arena. Psychologically, understanding different beliefs, levels of cognition, emotion and characteristics of people with different cultures, is needed in the teaching profession. In analyzing different the cultures of the people around the world needs knowledge. And what type of knowledge is needed? It is the cultural knowledge of teachers that will create unique pedagogy that caters to the learners with different cultures. Hence, this study aims to review some articles in analyzing the importance of cultural content knowledge in higher education. We argue that cultural content knowledge helps in realizing the cultural responsive pedagogy with the integration of the 21st century skills.

Cultural knowledge pedagogy in higher education

Howard & Clarence (2011) argue that “culturally responsive pedagogy” is an intervention method of teaching in attaining the learners’ outcomes of what they have understood from the discussions of their teachers. Meaning to say, this method of teaching is focusing on the different classroom activities integrating the concept of different cultures across the global arena. From this endeavor, the pedagogy is called cultural sensitivity. So, the most important strategy of teaching is cultural knowledge based emphasizing the facilitating learning activities in a culturally responsive classroom management. According to Howard & Clarence, (2011)“overall student outcomes, graduation rates, and college going rates increased when culturally responsive pedagogical practices were used”.

Moreover, according to Siwatu (2007) as cited by Majors (2010) “Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) is an approach to teaching and learning that (1) uses students’ cultural knowledge and experiences, (2) incorporates a culturally compatible classroom environment, (3) provides students with opportunities to demonstrate learning using a variety of assessment techniques, and (4) provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to function in mainstream culture while maintaining their cultural identity and native language. These mean that knowing the concepts of different cultures is an important aspect in the learning outcomes of diverse learners. Thus, teachers in higher education must be creative, innovative and imaginative in using pedagogy that helps diverse learners in the learning process with the 21st century skills. In fact:

“teachers trying to become more culturally responsive in their practice made efforts to build positive relationships with their students and create positive learning environments. Their action revealed an understanding about the need to balance social supports and academic press”(Keogh, 2013). The idea of Keogh states that teachers in higher education must be equipped with knowledge about different cultures of their learners and these will be used as the core values in teaching with harmonious essence of ecological climate among parents, teachers as well as school administrators and other stakeholders.

In addition, “Hawley & Nieto (2010) as cited by Keogh(2013) indicate:

“ ...that students' race and ethnicity influence teaching and learning in two important ways: how students respond to instruction and curriculum, and teachers' assumptions about how students learn and how much students are capable of learning...” This explains that learners with diverse cultures, should be analyzed first before using classroom facilitating learning activities. It means that through keen analysis of the different cultures of the learners, the power of knowledge is being used. We can call this as “cultural content knowledge in choosing pedagogy for the culturally responsive classroom management.

Shi, Visschers, Vivianne & Siegrist,(2015) emphasize that :

“...cultural values are stronger predictors of concern about climate change... cultural knowledge as a way of demonstrating an openness and willingness to learn...”

“A multidisciplinary teaching model was used to develop a pilot course for students in the human service professions of nursing, education, and social work to gain additional knowledge and skills in providing diverse clients with culturally appropriate services during field and clinical experiences (Munoz, DoBroka, 2009).

The statements of Shi, Visschers, Vivianne & Siegrist,(2015) as well as Munoz, DoBroka, (2009) try to emphasize the best pedagogy in higher education which is constructivism in a multidisciplinary settings. Meaning, in the teaching and learning process, the curriculum and instruction must be interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary cultural content knowledge pedagogy for higher education of learning. The approach of teaching must be based on the different cultures of the learners. It could be done through experiential and cultural facilitating activities.

Cross-cultural knowledge through digital literacy

In the findings of Li (2008) depict:

“ ...actual knowledge sharing behavior and moved knowledge sharing research toward understanding the complexity of technology-mediated knowledge sharing in cross-cultural contexts; provided sound explanations for cross-cultural knowledge sharing patterns by synthesizing the factors from separate fields including national culture, organizational studies and online communities of practice...”

The findings of Li(2008), explains the importance of media literacy in using cultural content pedagogy in higher education curriculum and instruction. Learning the different cultures across the global arena can be easily attained through online learning or digital literacy integration. That is, even how far are the people across the

globe, with the integration of information technology like internet, diverse cultures can be easily understood. Thus, cultural content knowledge pedagogy is still used in choosing the suitable educational technology in the enhancement of culturally responsive pedagogy across diverse cultures. Indeed, according to Chen , Sun, McQueen(2010):

“... insight into the cultural issues implicated in the structured knowledge transfer process, when a knowledge provider and a recipient are from different cultural dimensions, as well as offering more general insight into the mechanism of knowledge transfer in the cross-cultural business context...”

The above statements semantically explain that cultural content knowledge is the basic process of understanding the concept of different cultures throughout the globalized curriculum and instruction.

Cross-cultural environment

In the study of Li & Chang(2014) conceptualizes the important role of cross-cultural environments in understanding the key influencing problems that affect transfer of knowledge in the learning environment. It is being emphasized how relevant is cultural content knowledge in improving the comprehension skills of learners in attaining the cross-cultural knowledge ecological system. Hence, in the process of learning across diversity, negative thoughts like discriminatory practices should be avoided. In other words, cultural sensitivity must be observed and applied in the cultural content knowledge pedagogy in higher education. This is supported by Angela & Majumdar (2006):

“...schools reflect and perpetuate discriminatory practices of the larger society...; the programme was effective in increasing their cultural knowledge...”

Furthermore, the concept of “ecology and culture” (Flanagan & Laituri,2004)comprise interacting components through analyzing the integration of environment natural resources in sustaining ecological and cultural management. Knowledge about cultures is still emphasized through a cross-cultural approach with collaboration among the cultural groups.

Similarly, (Gordon, 2002) reveals the relevance of internalizing the meaning of culturally anthropological and socially capital theory in organizations for knowledge management practitioners. The thematic analysis of “collaborative” capabilities reflect to higher education institutions of learning in achieving the cultural content knowledge pedagogy as a method and strategy of learning the different cultures across the globe. Indeed, according to Javernick Will(2009):

“... efforts for acquiring, integrating and transferring the knowledge that is most important to their specific organizations and strategies...;long-range goal of this research, when combined with follow-on work, is to allow firms to capture and reuse global institutional knowledge more effectively, so they can develop economically, environmentally and socially sustainable practices for diverse local environments...”

The above statements focused on internationalization of cultural content knowledge pedagogy in higher education curriculum in sustaining the used of culturally responsive pedagogy for diversity. This is also supported with :

“The impact of socio-cultural developments on local knowledge may be anticipated from understanding the intracultural variation of knowledge”.’ Schunko, Grasser & Vogl(2012)

Conclusion

Based from the thorough analysis of some review articles, findings reveal that cultural content knowledge pedagogy refers to the innovative and creative method of teaching through the content integration of different cultures. The facilitating learning activities are drawn from the concept of different cultures. Thus, knowledge has the great role in analyzing and interpreting the outcomes of the said pedagogy in higher education. We strongly argue that cultural content knowledge is the best pedagogy across diversity.

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