

Jennifer Luna

ECE 210

11/26/2019

### Advocacy Project

Educational injustice still infiltrates our city and affects the way our children are being taught in schools. Being that children of diverse cultures aren't receiving the proper education they desire within the public schools they attend, they are being led to think that they aren't worthy of the same level of education as other students that attend more fortunate schools. Families of students are also affected by this epidemic as they feel like their voices won't be heard due to the lack of inclusion within their child's school.

To prevent further educational injustice, the school system should encourage teachers to implement a culturally responsive curriculum in their classrooms. Culturally responsive pedagogies are responsible for bringing inclusion in the classrooms where there are students of multiple cultures. This type of curriculum ensures each culture is being represented. Schools must provide teachers with training to show them ways to be open and unbiased towards cultures other than their own. Unbiased views allow teachers to better educate each child as they aren't being prejudice towards what those students need. When it comes to implementing such a curriculum, it takes a community effort. Which means teachers and parents should collaboratively work together to be proof that accepting each other's differences the dream work. Seeing such a team effort will encourage students to build acceptance of those are different than them as well.

In Norma Angelica Marrun's (2018) article titled "Culturally Responsive Teaching Across PK20" the author discusses the importance of culturally responsive teaching and honoring the names of multicultural students. Throughout the article, Marrun explains that the first step of

becoming a culturally responsive teacher is by taking the time to learn their students' names and to ensure that they can correctly pronounce it. Marrun emphasized the importance of teachers not assuming they know to pronounce a name, if they aren't sure they should find out a way to learn, whether it's by taking their time to research or ask the parents how their child's name is pronounced. When being a teacher in general, it is important to learn about the child as a whole but when you are a culturally responsive teacher that includes learning about the child's background to ensure you are bring materials into the classroom that relates to them. Some children dread roll call in a new school due to their name being mispronounced or butchered, it would be gratifying if a teacher asks a student how their name is pronounced instead of attempting to say it and not doing it correctly. We need to remember that our names are what identify us apart from others and a lot of times, children may be named after someone significant in their family or may have cultural connotations, so we must respect those names.

While thinking back to her own experiences in school, Marrun recalled an incident during roll call when her second-grade teacher mispronounced her name. She states, "Within the Latino community, children are taught to respect their teachers and questioning or correcting is a sign of disrespect ... I would not have corrected my teacher even if I had been fluent in English because I was taught not to question her authority and to respect the values of the school" (Marrun p. 8). The culturally values of respecting her elders and not defying their authority prohibited her from speaking up when the teacher decided to call her by her first name even though her family acknowledged her by her middle name. When it comes to situations like this when a child feels like their cultural upbringing is hindering them from speaking up, the teacher should build a sense of trust and advise students that if they feel uncomfortable, they can communicate it and they will be heard.

To reference the racial inequality that still exists in schools today, Marrun referred to a 2014 article by Gary Orfield and Erica Frakenberg, which stated, “While many educators believe that school segregation and unequal schools were issues of the past, racial inequality in schools has never been resolved and students of color continue to attend segregated and underfunded schools, and to be taught by unqualified and often long-term substitutes” (Marrun p. 11). Now in time, people think that since it’s been so long since segregation, but they lack to realize that racial inequality still occurs in our school systems and our children are the ones suffering academically because of it. The best way to help remove racial inequality from schools is by having teachers who revolve their curriculum around culturally responsive pedagogies. By showing our students that everyone has differences, we can teach them acceptance and how to love those differences to make everyone feel valued.

To help bring about change in the school system, training should be provided to teachers so they can learn how to include culture in their curriculum. The education system can’t just expect our teachers to know how to be culturally responsive, they need to be taught the same way we teach students. If teachers show their students, they are open to learn about different cultures, their students will follow suit. To prevent the Americanization of children’s names, teacher should give the parents the opportunities to come into their classroom and advise them the correct way to pronounce their child’s name, or if they have a preferred name that is not their birth name. Seeing that their teacher is taking their time to get to know them as a whole will help build a sense of trust and community in the classroom.

In Magnus O. Bassey’s (2016) article titled “Culturally Responsive Teaching: Implications for Educational Justice” the author describes how providing culturally responsive curriculum has various benefits for justice change. Throughout the article, Bassey explains that having teachers

include culturally responsive pedagogies in their curriculum helps enhance students' academic abilities. Bassey describes how fostering through a relationship with their students, teachers can demonstrate they care about their students' success. When mentioning a study that showcased the effects of culturally responsive teaching, Bassey states:

These studies underscore the importance of importance of culturally responsive teaching because, as these researchers found out, culturally responsive teaching is good for all children. In culturally responsive classrooms all children are valued and their contributions recognized; teachers are responsive to the needs for all children; they care for all children; they begin with contributions of every child; they use multiple teaching and learning strategies to engage students in active learning that encourages the development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills; and indeed, these teachers are able to adapt instruction to meet the needs individuals students (p. 2).

By taking an interest in the unique contributions each student made in the classroom, educators can take into account what each child needs to succeed. Teachers that take time out of their busy schedules to adhere to the needs of those they teach shows their students they care about their success and they aren't just there to do a job and go home.

Throughout the article Bassey explains how being a culturally responsive learning environment ignites a flame for social justice advocacy in students. He states, "In their own classrooms, students were taught how to channel their frustrations appropriately to initiate change because culturally responsive teaching encourages students' involvement in social development projects through collective action as a way of effecting change in their own communities" (Bassey p. 2). Students being taught by using culturally responsive pedagogies are more likely to speak up for social justice. Being that these students are taught without a rose-colored lens, they are open to the real inequalities of the world. Being in an honest and realistic environment, helps them advocate for those who can't speak up for themselves. As educators, it's important to be honest

with students to help build up stronger leaders of tomorrow who will stop at nothing to better the world.

In the article, Bassey identifies that educators need to be empowered to include culturally responsive pedagogies in their curriculum. It's important for educators to feel like they are being supported by their peers, students and parents; this support will encourage them to keep up this culturally aware curriculum. Being that a culturally responsive curriculum helps bring out the advocates in students, teachers must paint the picture of activism and the issues like educational injustice so students can be compelled to join together and stir up change.

In Amy J. Samuels (2018) article titled "Exploring Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Teachers' Perspectives on Fostering Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms" the author discusses the importance of teachers being provided with sufficient strategies to implement student centered culturally responsive pedagogies in the classroom. Samuels conducted a study of teaching over 4 months which helped her understand the perspective of teachers from elementary, middle and high schools. In the article Samuels describes the important of educators allowing students to actively participate in their learning experiences. Samuels' states:

Participants also emphasized that culturally responsive learning is characterized by high expectations for all students and actively engaging students in learning. Reinforcing strategies of collaborative and constructivist learning, culturally responsive frequently assume the role of learning facilitator and encourage students to take a lead role in the learning process (p. 27).

Allowing students to submerge themselves in the learning process will allow educators to see how they can best help certain students. If students can feel as their opinions about their education matters, they will give learning their undivided attention.

In the article, Samuels also explains how having a culturally responsive curriculum brings about positive relationships that help build trust in educators and their students. Samuels' states:

Culturally responsiveness has the potential to positively influence classroom culture, foster positive. Relationships, and build a solid relationship of trust. They spoke about how these components not only encourage students to feel connected, included, and valued, but lead to empowerment on behalf of students, helping them better understand and positively view both themselves and other; thereby inspiring them to maintain cultural identity and integrity (p. 24-25).

Building a sense of trust and community with students helps the educational process occur smoother. Knowing that they can trust their teachers will make students want to participate in the classroom. By putting in effort to make each. Child feel included, teachers will be able to better connect with students and help them make the classroom a place where the students can be their true selves.

To ensure a safe environment is provided to implement culturally responsive pedagogies, teachers need to ensure they need to have the support of their faculty members. Schools should provide teachers with meetings and conferences in which they can come up with innovative ways to teach students. Educators should take it upon themselves to ensure they make the effort to build relationships with their students. Having a relationship will ensure that both parties have a sense of respect, trust and bring forth inclusion amongst everyone.

As a future educator and the parent of a biracial son, the best way to bring forth this issue and target other parents and teachers to stand up for those students who are not being shown the same educational support. The first step would be to get to teachers interested in the culturally responsive teaching style so that they can connect more with their students. To get the issue of educational justice heard, attending conferences for teachers would be a great start. Being in a place where I would be able to educate other educators about incorporating culturally responsive

curriculum will help bring light to the benefits students receive from it. Teachers would be able to see how students can improve academically and build relationships with those educating them. Being taught in a culturally inclusive environment teaches them as a whole and doesn't just bulk all students in one category.

If teachers, parents, children and members of the school system band together to bring notice to the issue of educational injustice, we can bring about change. One of the ways we can bring change is by rallying together for change and joining organizations such as The NYC Coalition for Educational Justice. The NYC Coalition for Educational Justice is an organization led by culturally diverse parents across the city to end inequalities within the public-school system. On the organization's website, their mission states, "We are a collaborative of community-based organizations and unions whose members include culturally diverse parents, community members, students and educators. We are motivated by the urgent need to obtain a quality and well-rounded education for all students" (<http://www.nyccej.org>). This is a powerful motivator as no matter the child's background, they are all deserving of the best educational foundation to help aide their future success. This organization is fighting to ensure the curriculum taught in the classrooms are culturally responsive. Based on the website's homepage, on June 4<sup>th</sup>, the organization rallied together to bring awareness to the Department of Education to have them continue anti-bias training. At the rally, Chancellor Richard Carranza spoke about how providing culturally responsive curriculum is revolutionary in gaining educational justice. Due to the current climate, now more than ever teachers need to educate children about diversity and how to accept differences in one another.

Aside from protesting and rallying together, attending town hall meetings will help ensure that people with power hear our concerns. Allowing those people that make decisions in

educational reforms time to hear from actual teachers and parents of students will help them make decisions that will benefit students and not just their pockets. Making those in power aware of. The needs of students will make help them make decisions and provide funds to include culturally responsive teaching trainings and workshops for educators to better implement curriculum in our school system. Now is the time to ensure that we use our right to advocate to ensure our students now and those to come have the education and inclusion they deserve.

Advocating to bring about educational justice is extremely important especially in the climate we are living in now. More than ever we need to ensure that educators are teaching students about inclusion and accepting diversity. As the mother of a three-year-old biracial son, this cause is near and dear to my heart. It's extremely important to know that not only am I teaching my son to love his difference and that of others, but to know that I have the support of his educators assures me that he will be brought up as a decent human being. To help end the racial and cultural divide in schools, we need to show our students to love their differences, so they can learn to do the same for those around them. The more we promote acceptance as a united front, the more love we will grow, and the less hate will exist in the world.

## Works Cited

Bassey, M. O. [magnus.bassey@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:magnus.bassey@qc.cuny.edu) . (2016). Culturally Responsive

Teaching: Implications for Educational Justice. *Education Sciences*, 1-6.

[https://res.mdpi.com/d\\_attachment/education/education-06-00035/article\\_deploy/education-06-00035.pdf](https://res.mdpi.com/d_attachment/education/education-06-00035/article_deploy/education-06-00035.pdf)

Marrun, N. A. 1. norma. [marrun@unlv](mailto:marrun@unlv). ed. (2018). Culturally Responsive Teaching

Across PK-20: Honoring the Historical Naming Practices of Students of Color.

*Taboo: The Journal of Culture & Education*, 17(3), 6–25.

<https://doi-org.bmcc.ezproxy.cuny.edu/10.31390/taboo.17.3.04>

NYC Coalition for Educational Justice. (n.d.). Retrieved October 1, 2019, from

<http://www.nyccej.org/>

Samuels, A. J. (2018). Exploring Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Teachers' Perspectives

on Fostering Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms. *SRATE Journal*, Winter 2018, 22-30.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1166706.pdf>