

Culturally Responsive Instruction for Native American Students

CRI Introduction - Reflection

Your Name:

As mentioned in the introductory video, culturally responsive instruction assumes that a “firm grounding in the heritage language and culture indigenous to a particular tribe is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of culturally-healthy students and communities associated with that place...” (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998)

1. What is your own grounding in language and culture? How does this grounding support you to be “culturally-healthy”?

2. Why do you think it’s important for Native students to have a “firm grounding” in their heritage language and culture?

Here are some quotes from the video that describe culturally responsive instruction. Culturally responsive instruction is:

“Instruction that “makes sense” to students who are not members of, or assimilated into, dominant social group” (Klug & Whitfield, 2003)

“Recognizes, respects, and uses students’ identities and backgrounds as meaningful sources for creating educational experiences and environments” (Gay, 2000)

“Includes high expectations for all students” (Gay, 2000)



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“Designed and practiced in ways that resonate with students’ home cultures students, “building a bridge” between home and school” (Pewewardy & Hammer, 2003)

“Involves learning about needs of diverse students, taking action to address needs, and adapting approaches as student needs change over time” (Klump & McNeir, 2005)

3. How do these attributes of culturally responsive instruction match up to your current instructional practices? What is one thing you’re already doing well and one thing you’d like to improve?

In thinking about equity and its meaning, the Arizona department of education guidance on culturally inclusive practices offers an important insight. It states that, “Equity does not equal equality. Rather, an equitable educational system provides resources and supports at the level needed by each individual student and recognizes that all students do not need the same supports.”

4. How do you address equity in your classroom?

Culturally responsive instruction is also more aligned with goals that tribal nations have for their children. Tribal goals are particularly important to keep in mind because of tribes’ unique government-to-government relationship with the U.S. Federal government. Tribes are legally, nations within a nation, and have a high degree of sovereignty over such matters as the nature of schooling for their youth.

5. What are some goals your students’ tribes have for their children’s education?



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6. How can you support these tribal goals in your school and classroom?