

### **Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching Essay**

According to the California Department of Education and Gloria Ladson-Billings, culturally and linguistically responsive teaching is to solve the inequalities and injustices problems in the school systems today that will increase disadvantages for the culturally and linguistically diverse students. Culturally responsive teaching involves using the students' cultural experiences and perspectives for learning. Every student has a different cultural background, and they need to connect with the teacher and their peers to create relationships with each other through the lectures and class activities. Some students have the beginning level of English skills, so they need help with vocabulary and grammar, and teachers need to adjust their teaching styles by implementing small group activities. According to Geneva Gay, the schools have to make improvements for the diverse students through culturally responsive teaching. This is important for teachers so that the students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) or have lower-level English skills can fully engage in the learning in higher-level content.

My own educational experiences have shaped my understanding of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching. I was born in Japan, and I moved to Singapore at three years old. In Singapore, I attended the Learning Vision, which was a kindergarten school, and I spoke English for the first time there. After that, I went to a Japanese elementary school and I studied English more deeply through the class and at home. In 2017, I moved to the United States, and I learned and developed higher-level English skills. While developing these skills, my counselor suggested that I take the English Language Proficiency Assessment to test my reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Besides taking this assessment annually in high school, I took regular English courses, and I met with other students who had different cultural backgrounds and struggled with higher-level English vocabulary and grammar. I got into this group of students, and we developed these skills throughout the courses by reading materials, small group discussion activities, and group projects. When I moved to UC Merced, I continued meeting different students from diverse backgrounds, such as those who had different cultures and those who had proficient levels of English skills. I also made friends who had advanced levels of English skills but had different cultural backgrounds, and I communicated with them daily during the lunch breaks to gain deeper knowledge about other students' cultures and improve my English skills. These experiences helped my current learning environment by engaging in

learning with other students and friends to strengthen our language and academic skills and confidence together.

Even today, many inequities related to cultural background and language proficiency exist in the current educational system. Based on my experiences, I met some students who didn't have the opportunity to take higher tracking courses, such as Advanced Placement and Honors classes, including extracurricular activities. Instead, they needed to take the English Language Development course. This separation creates inequality and an opportunity gap because students who had the opportunity to take higher tracking courses had proficient levels of English skills, but those who did not meant that they needed to develop English skills through the English Language Development course. These barriers highlight why culturally and linguistically responsive teaching is important in the current educational system, because the students who are placed on lower tracking can receive less academic support and resources compared to the students who are placed on higher tracking. As a future teacher, I have to learn all students' cultural backgrounds on the first day of the class, and I have to adjust or modify my teaching styles based on these backgrounds, so that all students can engage more on learning and can support each other using academic resources such as tutoring hub and teachers' office hours, even if they are taking higher tracking courses.

There are several real-world issues related to the culture that I will continue to focus on as a future teacher, including redressing bias in the current school system. One of the issues is the inequality of representing diverse cultures and languages in class materials and assignments. The students who have lower-level English skills have a hard time understanding the vocabulary of the text and the American-based perspectives, so I will implement the glossary at the end of each attached class materials and assignments for the definitions of difficult words, and have diverse viewpoints for all students to connect their experiences. Another issue is the class expectations, and the teachers will set up lower expectations to adjust their teaching styles for the students who have lower-level English skills. This cannot give the students the opportunity to engage in higher-level and career-based experiences for the future, nor can it create good relationships with other people. As a future teacher, I will implement higher class expectations to give the students opportunities for academic support, such as a tutoring hub and office hours, and create good relationships with their peers.

Overall, culturally and linguistically responsive teaching is important to be implemented in the current and future education system because the students who don't have a proficient level of English can fully engage in their learning using their strengths, and they have an opportunity to use academic resources and support from other people to develop their English skills. This can solve the bias and problems in the current education system by knowing every student's cultural backgrounds, modifying the lesson plan with higher class expectations, and giving all students an equal opportunity to get academic support and get into the higher tracking courses. As a future teacher, I will implement what I have learned from culturally and linguistically responsive teaching by reflecting on my practices and creating a classroom for the students to engage more in their learning with some academic opportunities and help.