Meghan Whelan

Lesson 1.2B\_Reflection

Forming an Asset-Based Approach

I don’t think I can pinpoint just one thing that surprised me about the reading material for culturally responsive teaching. Most of it was all new to me and I learned so much. I had an idea of the main concept, but I really haven’t dealt with this personally in the classroom. I have three students currently in a reading group first thing in the morning, and none of them fall into this category. Then I rotate classes the remainder of the day, and the only student I interact with that this would relate to is a 7th grade boy from Russia. He has graduated from the ELL program and can communicate well. This lesson has helped me to set a personal goal for myself going forward to incorporate multicultural instructional materials and real-world connections to my lessons. My hope is to make all my students feel as if they belong. The bonus will be that the entire classroom will benefit from it by learning more about their classmates and have a better understanding of where they each come from.

I hope that if I am ever in a situation where I am having bias intentions, that I can recognize and quickly change my focus. I don’t think it would be in a judgement way, for myself personally, but rather in such a way that I feel more comfortable doing or talking about something a certain way and not considering that my student may have a hard time learning my way. I plan to always strive to focus on the strengths and potential of each of my students over any biased opinions I may have. Recognizing the assets that students with different cultural backgrounds bring is extremely important. Their experiences can enhance the classroom learning environment. When I speak with my one student from Russia about the histories and culture of where he is from, I try to be respectful and engaged letting him know I am interested in learning about him and his background. One question that I do have is how to get my students to engage positively in one another about cultural differences. My classroom, being a special education classroom, comes with its challenges in this area. They tend to want to laugh at everything and it is hard to get them to really listen to one another and learn about each other.

Lesson Idea:

* **Grade level**: 5th Grade
* **Content area**: Social Studies
* **Topic**: Segregation in the United States
* **Culturally responsive element**:
  + The lesson will highlight the experiences of African Americans and other marginalized groups during segregation. Students will hear real stories and read about people who lived through segregation, helping them to gain understanding of the emotional and social impacts of racial discrimination.
  + I would make sure my students understand what segregation means and how it might make people feel. Next, I would discuss the topic, emphasizing the separation of races in schools, public places, and communities. (A current teacher at our school is related to one of the first black women to walk into Robertsville Middle School and stop segregation. This was before Ruby Bridges even. Our teacher is currently in the process of having a monument placed in their honor. I would ask if he could speak briefly to my students during this lesson).
  + We will end with a class discussion.