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**Ladson-Billings Reading Reflection**

Before Reading:

1. I am impacted by my own culture when planning instruction because my past experiences, particularly in school, shape how I design a lesson. I have experienced both good and bad teachers. I try to include activities that the good teachers have done, and avoid experiences that bad teachers have done. I observed one teacher this May, who did some type of hands-on activity as the majority of her lesson every single day. This motivates me to try to do the same.

However, I also need to be aware of the cultures of my students when designing a lesson plan. I have to keep in mind that they might not be used to a certain type of activity. For example, a student may not be familiar with presenting in front of the whole class, especially if English is not their native language.

1. I can think of a few ways that my lack of exposure to different cultures might inhibit my teaching. I also have to keep in mind that some cultures may not put as high a priority on education as mine did. While I have always been able to make school my priority, for some families simply putting dinner on the table may have to be their priority. This makes it critical to get to know my students, so that I can understand where they are coming from.

During Reading Summaries:

1. But how do we do it?—Successful teaching of poor student of color stems from changing how teachers think about social contexts, students, curriculum and instruction.

Social Contexts—Culturally relevant teachers are aware of the social situations that poor students of color come from.

The Students—Culturally relevant teachers have high expectations despite the hardships their students face and realize that their students depend on school to be successful in life.

The Curriculum—Culturally relevant teachers know that curriculum is not culturally neutral, and they must be able to deconstruct, construct, and reconstruct it.

Instruction—Culturally relevant teachers use a variety of strategies to engage students while preparing them for the future.

Academic Achievement—Culturally relevant teachers prioritize student learning and communicate their long-term academic goals with students.

Cultural Competence—Teachers should ensure cultural competence in their students by exposing them to the dominant culture in their lives while honoring their own culture.

Sociopolitical Consciousness—Teachers must understand the local sociopolitical issues of and incorporate the issues into their instruction so that students can better understand and critique these issues.

The Culpability of Teacher Education—What little diversity that education students are exposed to is not enough to prepare them to work with poor, ESL, or minority students.

What is a teacher to do?--There are no set procedures for teachers to follow to be successful multicultural educators; rather they must consider their students' needs and abilities when choosing strategies that best make a positive life-long impact on their students.

1. I love the idea of building solidarity between the teacher and students. Instead of fighting against each other, the teacher and her students are now on the same team with the same goals. Being reminded of the successes of Toni Morrison, Benjamin Carson, and Fannie Lou Hamer is inspiring in itself. Upon further research, I found that Ben Carson struggled academically in elementary school, but started to succeed in middle and high school. My guess is that there was at least one teacher who believed in him enough to push him harder than before. This shows the power of having high expectations and how changing how you *think* is critical to becoming a critically relevant teacher. I will have to remind myself of the potential of my students and the huge impact that I can have on their lives.

After Reading:

1. Teachers that practice culturally relevant pedagogy use everything they can learn about their students’ needs, abilities, and culture to redesign curriculum and instruction so that it ensures student learning and makes a positive life-long impact on their students.
2. There is no set way to help students of color, rather teachers must first change the way that they think about students of color. Because students of color often have unfamiliar cultures and backgrounds, we must first get to know them. This will change how we *think* about students of color and allow us to customize what we *do* in the classroom to our students’ lives. In addition, simply being aware of any bias you have is a critical communicating high standards to all your students (Marzano Ch. 9).