

60-Second SoTL

Episode 25 – Reimagining curricula for cultural sensitivity

(Piano Music)

0:03

Jessie L. Moore:

What are the effects of culturally sensitive curriculum on students' engagement and academic interactions? That's the question for this week's 60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning. I'm Jessie Moore.

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(Piano Music)

0:18

"Reimagining curricula: Effects of cultural (in)sensitivity of curricula on racially minoritized students' engagement" was published as an open access article in *Studies in Higher Education*. Dave Thomas and Kathleen Quinlan explore the extent to which Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic students perceive their university curriculum as culturally sensitive and the relationship between cultural sensitivity and both students' academic interactions with teachers and their interest in the subject.

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The researchers developed a set of Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales, grouped into four factors: 1) whether ethnically diverse peoples' experiences and perspectives are represented, 2) how ethnic minorities are represented, with a focus on positive portrayals seeking to overcome stereotypes, 3) whether students are encouraged to develop critical consciousness to challenge power, and 4) the nature of classroom teacher-to-student and peer-to-peer interactions.

1:13

Thomas and Quinlan administered the Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales survey to 262 students enrolled in post-secondary and post graduate studies at a UK university. Using exploratory factor analysis and additional comprehensive statistical analyses, they confirmed that Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (or BAME) students perceived the curriculum as less culturally sensitive than White students, and BAME students' scores were significantly lower than White students' on all four subscales. BAME students also reported significantly fewer academic interactions with their teachers.

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Moreover, ethnicity significantly predicted perceptions of Diversity Represented, Positive Portrayals, Challenging Power, and Inclusive Classroom Interaction – each of which also significantly predicted students’ interactions with teachers. Diversity Represented and Challenging Power Structures also significantly predicted students’ interest in curriculum topics.

2:11

These findings suggest that curriculum revisions that integrate diverse perspectives and experiences and that challenge inequities can increase minoritized students’ interest. However, including positive portrayals that confront stereotypes and modeling inclusive practices in the classroom also are necessary to create higher education climates in which BAME students feel more comfortable interacting with their teachers.

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Thomas and Quinlan share their Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scales constructs and items and suggest directions for future research. To learn more about the study, follow the link in our show notes to read this open access article and to review our supplemental resources for this episode.

2:48

(Piano Music)

2:51

Join us next week for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning on **60-second SoTL from Elon University’s Center for Engaged Learning**. Learn more about the Center at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

3:03

(Piano Music)