Chapter 15
Implementation of CORE Traits to Become an Interculturally Responsive Leader in a Second Language Classroom: A Narrative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this chapter was to describe CORE leadership traits for teachers and leaders that will assist them in being interculturally responsive educators and improve learning in the second language classroom. Communication, organization, relationships, and enthusiasm (CORE) are traits that consistently improve teacher/leader social interactions with students and thus improve the educators’ ability to enhance the learning experience (Mixon, 2010). What’s in your CORE? Being predisposed to cultural issues is imperative for pre-service teachers to prepare appropriately to teach students of other cultures (Barnes, 2006; Cooper, 2007; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006). Henkin and Steinmetz’s (2008) goal was to produce teachers who are prepared to provide an academically sound education in a culturally responsive classroom. The culturally responsive classroom is pivotal to align with the globalization of students that has dramatically changed the demographics in our educational institutions today.

INTRODUCTION

Being predisposed to cultural issues is imperative for pre-service teachers to prepare appropriately to teach students of other cultures (Barnes, 2006; Cooper, 2007; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006). Henkin and Steinmetz’s (2008) goal was to produce teachers who are prepared to provide an academically sound education in a culturally responsive classroom. The culturally responsive classroom is pivotal to align

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with the globalization of students that has dramatically changed the demographics in our educational institutions today. Vygotsky’s (1978) development of the culturally responsive classroom provided a framework for teachers to be prepared to engage students of all cultures. The framework is founded upon the social component or affective aspect of teaching in the classroom. The sociocultural theory explored and impacted the teaching and learning process of all students through the social interactions of the teacher (Hutchinson, 2011). Keengwe (2010) also explored the relationship between educational practices and social-cultural patterns related to race, ethnicity, culture, social class, gender, sexual orientation and other exceptionalities. He found that pre-service teachers gain understanding and greater appreciation from cross-cultural experiences. These experiences enhance the teacher’s ability to not only sympathize with the students but also empathize with the students. The understanding of teaching and actually being able to teach are two different trains of thought (Maxwell, 1999). Multicultural books, visual aids, manipulatives, and cultural exposure were ways to familiarize pre-service teachers to other cultures. The ability to communicate is possible regardless of language. The changing demographics of our classrooms require our teachers to be able to communicate with all races, all ethnicities, and all cultures. Teachers’ belief systems are developed interrelatedly with the sociocultural context (Lee & Dallman, 2008; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001). According to Lee and Dallman (2008), teacher attributes and belief systems’ are infused in classroom management along with classroom instruction. This is the alignment of affective and cognitive practices in the classroom that enables the classroom to be more culturally responsive.

In 2005, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty performed a comprehensive meta-analysis utilizing quantitative methods to garner insight into leadership. Leadership is shared on our campuses today with administrators and teacher leaders sharing the responsibilities to improve instruction for all students. The meta-analysis questioned the connection among student academic achievement (i.e. standardized test scores) and principal/teacher leadership. Criteria used in the meta-analysis were: studies were from 1970 to the present; United States educational institutes were entailed or conditions that paralleled the values of the U. S. educational system; and K-12 learners were required. There were 69 studies that met the conditions for the meta-analysis. A purposeful sample or a convenience sample was demonstrated in most of the studies that met the criteria. Questionnaires requesting teachers’ insight of the principals’ leadership behaviors were used in most studies. The lens of the teacher examining the behaviors of their leaders exemplified the traits or characteristics that teachers know and yearn for to improve student success. Student academic achievement was measured with a state test or a standardized achievement test. The correlation form in effect sizes were described.

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) analyzed 69 studies to discover that there were 21 leadership responsibilities/traits substantively related to student achievement. The calculated mean correlation of .25 was used to evaluate the relationship between principal/teacher leadership behaviors and student academic achievement. The 21 leadership responsibilities were identified as follows:

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- Change agent,
- Contingent rewards,
- Communication,
- Culture,
- Discipline,
- Flexibility,
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