Professional Development School Experiences and Culturally Responsive Teaching

Panel 1.5: Education Past and Future

Culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002), or culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), is the use of the students’ own cultural knowledge, experiences, learning preferences, and common cultural examples while developing curriculum, teaching, and managing behavior. Given that knowledge of learners and cultural awareness is a critical component of teaching (Shulman, 1987), the goal of culturally responsive teaching is to maintain students’ own cultural awareness while preparing them to function competently in the world outside of their own culture. In pre-service teacher courses and field placements, faculty must address issues of cultural knowledge and assist future teachers in developing the skills and attitudes necessary to work with culturally diverse students. Researchers use an adaptation of Siwatu’s culturally responsive scales (2007) to show how working in diverse off-campus professional development school environments can facilitate the pre-service teachers’ understanding of culturally responsive teaching and assist faculty in forming enhanced experiences for future teachers.