Cultural Dimensions in Teaching the Culturally Different in the Classroom

By: Dr. Arthur W. Zimiga
Title VII – Indian Education Director
Rapid City Area Schools

Fundamental changes in the United States have been occurring at an accelerated rate based upon the cultural diversity of the population. The old industrial model approach to public instruction and teaching is now being viewed as both economically outmoded and based on wrong assumptions about how people best work and learns together. The growing awareness of cultural diverse groups in America has continually stated that their traditions are essential to maintain a sense of community and personal identity. The right of one cultural group to dominated others by setting the standards for how to think about individual’s, success, technology, and so forth is also being challenged along ethnic and gender lines. The deteriorating condition of the environment is further creating how we believe; centuries-old beliefs remain unaffected while others are being fundamentally restructured. These are some of the reasons why cultural dimensions in teaching and learning have become the major changes and challenges to supervisors and teachers in the classroom.

This outline observation guide on Cultural Dimensions in Teaching Culturally Different was developed in response to changes taking place in our most basic areas of understanding. Modern science is overturning long-held views about the nature of the rational process, language, and even the way cultural differences are interpreted. This new language has become metaphoric and normalizes the experience and thought patterns of cultural diversity. These fundamental changes are intended remove the major foundation holding together the structure of belief that still underlies most current approaches to teaching and supervisory/research observation in the classroom. Current advance practices on our belief system, with some centuries-old beliefs remaining unchanged while other are being drastically restructured in order to recognize the importance of cultural diversity in teaching the current population of the United State.

The values of have knowledge about cultural dimensions in recognizing cultural diversity in the classroom is the major value of this observation guide. Supervisors and teachers in public, government, private, service orientated organizations as well as religious institutions must understand that teachers are the gatekeepers in the process of primary socialization. Recognizing students’ behavior is a way of communicating about relationships that are affected by the student’s primary culture. Teaching to cultural identity balances the use of control with the achievement of agreement with the students as well as teaching related to recent developments in the social and natural sciences. The classroom has become the ecology of language and cultural patterns that reflects upon
making more sense in terms of recent social developments related to cultural diversity and cultural dimensions in teaching in the classroom.

This guide is intended to assist the supervisor or observer to keeping in mind the multiple dimensions of the classroom environment. The classroom environment relates to the ecology including aspects of teacher decision-making that have always been part of the classroom, but generally have not been recognized because of old and now out-of-date patterns of thinking. Whether the teacher gives equal authority to the spoken and written word, and to whether the teacher places language in historical context are crucially important aspects of a culturally responsive approach to supervision and observation. The inquiry has to be related to recent developments in other fields of knowledge. Instruction needs to recognize that old assumptions about language, individualism, behavior, and the rational process cannot be used as the basis of implementing this guide. To do so will cause one to become another casualty to the longstanding problem of putting new milk into old used containers.

This guide gives brief explanations of observation in the classroom environment for a supervisor or research inquiry, but it should be recognize that these explanations, are really not adequate in themselves, and that they should be supplemented by further readings. This guide should be viewed as a starting point upon which others may build.

The learning environment of the classroom pertains not only to formal training and learning but also to the work place where cultural dimension in teaching must have its roots. This guide should be seen as a seed from a great oak tree by nurturing to closing the gap between cultural diversity as strength rather than being viewed as a weakness of American society.

The theoretical framework of this guide is to provide cultural diversity training to the market place as well as in the school classroom in order to reflect new perspectives to meet the needs of a changing population.
The following must include the pedagogy as it relates to the Native American student and their native culture as well as Native learning theory and practical understanding and pedagogical or pedagogic or, relating to, or befitting a teaching or education – pedagogically. Pedagogue or pedagog a slave who escorted children to school becomes the teacher, schoolmaster.

Pedagogy (the art, science, or profession of teaching)

**Cultural Dimension in Teaching and Observation in the Classroom**

Supervision is the evaluation inquiry in the background and understanding nature of culture. Supervision becomes the means in which to measure and evaluate cultural dimensions and diversity of teaching and learning in the classroom. The practice of inquiries in the classroom have used the following:

1. Uses of behavioral checklist, rating scales, or low inference, observation schedules are useful instruments for education research. These research forms are only a slice of what it means to teach.

2. Cultural dimensions in teaching must include metaphor, body language, turn taking, humor, gender, bias, and framing for these topics are useful in addressing the cultural aspects of learning.

These cultural observation guides serve as memory aids for supervision, which overlap, with teaching.

1. Observations related to teaching must be understood in terms of what the students are learning; the mental environment or the nature of ideas conveyed in the classroom.

2. These observations elate to student-teacher relationships or the social ecology of the classroom.

Cultural dimension are related to both mental and social environments of teaching that can be called ecologies of learning. How observations are made is critical to each context. The states for observation of cultural dimensions have the following stages.
These four stages of cultural dimension will be used as guilds for classroom observation and institutional inquiry.

PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCING:

Initial training, meetings and discussions with the teacher are critical for several reasons:

1. Framing the questions intended to use in the observation of the classroom that is understandable by both the observer and the teacher.

   • Provide opportunity for supervisor to begin observation by asking question, taking notes of background information relevant to the teacher’s assumptions and cultural presuppositions about the nature of teaching related to culture. The observer’s receptiveness to the teacher’s point of view helps to avoid teacher-supervisor (observer) miscommunication later on.

   • Sensitive shown by supervisor or observer is the same cultural patterns in the supervisor-teacher relationship as exist in the teach-student relationship.

2. Observation Points of Viewing the Teacher’s Cultural Dimensions begin by:

   • Provides the opportunity for the supervisor and teacher to discuss the anticipated focus of classroom observations. The question of focus is critical.

   • What metaphors do teachers use in describing their work?

   • On what traditions and values are these metaphors grounded?
What is communicated? Teacher-supervisor relationship non-verbal messages culturally specific? How do teachers and supervisor manage to frame these initial meetings? What types of humor could be used to promote solidarity. Will the use of technical words be viewed as an expression of power?

3. Supervisors should share the observation guide with teachers or provide an overview of the content while making it clear that the guide encompass far more than could be addressed even over a lengthy period.

- Supervisor should be viewed as a “problem solver” who brings professional skills to whatever the teacher has defined as a difficulty or source trouble. Supervisors must assist teachers in formulating as well as in solving problems. Supervisor’s professional responsibilities include providing leadership by defining the scope and content of supervision.

- The observation process needs to be genuinely helpful to teacher, the supervisor must be willing to assist them in formulating as well as in solving problems. Viewing this observation perspective should be seen as gaining fresh insights into what others and we take for granted.

- This reflection alone does not provide for the types of learning what we hope teachers will model; Supervisor’s professional responsibilities include providing leadership when it comes to defining the scope and content of supervision

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS:

Observation by supervision must strive toward a heightened perception of cultural patterns that will afford them insight into what they have observed. Observation as a skill must be achieved rather than prescribed. The broad purposes are concerned foremost with fostering cultural awareness and the ability to fully participate in cultural processes of renewal. Here are some the ways using the guide:

1. The observation guide in conjunction with field notes where the observer records ongoing events as well as observational cultural themes can be used in the classroom as part of an observation notebook.

2. The observer need not consult the guide during an observation. The observer may wish to review certain points only immediately before or after a period of observation in order to remind them of either specific topics or the relationships between topics.
3. The observer may refer to the guide during their observations, but only when they sense that their field notes are being disjointed or superficial. After the observer has gained experience in recognizing patterns of tacit, cultural knowledge, (e.g., metaphor, nonverbal communication, framing, etc.), they may refer to the observation guide less and less frequently. The guide is to be used with a good deal of flexibility.

REVIEW:

The Reviewing Stage is the step where the supervisor goes back over their field notes in order to develop themes that can help explain what they have observed and generated the educational significance of those observation. The focused inquiry of observation is a broad based collection of examples, illustrations, and descriptions. A particular description may not be immediately apparent even when it is a relevant component of the teacher’s daily instruction. The observation guide can be used to position a description or example within the framework that lends itself to both meaning and significance. This process helps the observer to:

1. Linking isolated examples to a variety of themes such as how does the teacher comments frame a particular subject in order for the teacher to provide the students with a vocabulary that enables them to recognize the cultural grounding of knowledge, and is the teacher able to relate the curriculum to the student’s experience.

2. Subject matter analyses must focus on the ability to recognize the otherwise hidden patterns of culture.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK:

The post-observation conference is viewed as the primary context for providing teachers with feedback and recommendations. The feedback may take the form of either written or verbal reports. Highly perceptively written reports are likely to include a good deal of detailed description and narrative given in brief stories. Because usually written reports utilize open and abstractive as well as summation language it become for important for the observers or supervisors to use the observation guide or similar framework in monitoring how they provide feedback.

The way the observer needs to report should include:

1. The tone, metaphor, and diction along with the style as well as the message given. Quality of paper used and whether a report is handwritten or typed help frame the message and thus influences the
teacher-supervisor relationship. In the case of verbal reports similar concerns apply: Tone (in its literal meaning, posture, the location of the conference (on whose turf?), patterns of turn-taking, pacing, the use of space, gestures, facial expressions, and dress all related to shaping the messages the teacher takes away from the exchange.

2. The major importance of this exchange is to focus within the context of providing feedback. It should be understood that the supervisors would be mistaken in any attempt to “cover” all of the topics suggested by the observation guide. The supervisor in reporting must be selective in what they choose to report, assessing information viewed as most significant in terms of the broader purposes of education. By relating to tacit knowledge precisely, will help move the reporter from providing general feedback to more focused comments are important not only because they are potentially informative, but because they communicate a sensitivity to the complexity of the environment of the classroom.

The method of observation will have eleven illustrated observation guides. Each belongs to one of two major categories: the mental or social environment of classroom ecology, which will overlap. These two plots relate to how the observation (example of teaching) is understood in terms of what the students are learning. Second, the observation is understood in terms of student-teacher relationships to one another culturally?

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<tr>
<th>Mental Environment (nature of ideas conveyed in classroom)</th>
<th>Social Environment (Understood in terms of student-teacher relationships)</th>
<th>Pre-observation Conferencing Cycle</th>
<th>Classroom Observations Cycle</th>
<th>Review of Field Notes Cycle</th>
<th>Feedback Conferencing Cycle</th>
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<td>Metaphor</td>
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These plots will serve as memory guilds during the process of observation. Using the observation guides at various stages will create an observation cycle.

TERMS FOR UNDERSTANDING OBSERVATION PROCESS

**Metaphor:** to carry over; transfer, beyond, over; to bring, bear

1. A figure of speech in which a word or phase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another by way of suggesting a likeness or analogy between them.
2. Metaphorical – pertaining to; or comprising a metaphor
3. Meta – a prefix meaning in general along with, after, denoting.
4. Metaphrase: a translation from one language into another
   - to make a metaphrase of.
   - to alter the wording of.

**Ana logic thinking:** have or pertaining to analogy.
   - A relation of likeness, between two things or of one thing to or with another, consisting in the resemblance not of the things themselves but of two or more attributes, circumstances, or effects.

   - Logic. A form of inference in which it is reasoned that if two (or more) things agree with one another in one of more respects, they will (probably) agree in yet other respects

   - Philol. The principle or process in accordance with which existing words are modified or new words created in conformity with familiar word groups – syn. See LIKENESS-

**Iconic:**

Pertaining to an icon, image or other representation (statues and busts sculptured according to fixed or conventional representation or symbolism

**Icon:**

An image of representation; a portrait; picture; illustration; now usually, a monumental portrait statue. Example image of Christ, the Virgin Mary, Saint, etc’s
1. George Washington cutting down a cherry tree

2. Indian attacking a wagon train with women and children crying and men shooting and defending the group of people in their company.

Root Metaphors: “Root”
   a. an ancestor; hence, an early race; stem
   b. the cause; source
   c. the lowest placed, position, or part; hence, the essential point or part

GUIDES FOR OBSERVATION IN THE CLASSROOM:

The following guides only suggest the assumptions that are brought into focus by a culturally responsive approach to supervision/observation. Below each numbered pattern has included one or more examples. These examples offer important illustrations of what to look for, but they do not exhaust the many possible forms that a given pattern might take within the context of a particular class.

Guide #1  Structure of the Lesson

*Following identifiable structure and different approaches will influence the structural sequentially of the lesson, certain key elements are generally present. How students are to be involved often depends upon how the teacher frames the open and closing of the lesson, communicates expectations for student, and makes adjustment in teaching style to match the flow of classroom events.*

1. Introduction of the Lesson: Framing (establishing a common understanding and participation).

   A. Clear opening frame that establishes the purpose or context of the lesson
      • Non-verbal: Teacher position in the classroom is in the center or front of room, raises voice, gestures, etc.
      • Direct statement: “Today’s lesson is on Native Americans”
      • Metaphor: “OK, let’s get together”

   B. Acknowledgment of how the main issues of previous lessons relate to current lesson
      • “in comparison, “ as we saw before,” “in contrast,” “this lesson is related to,” “connected with, “an example of”, "the central concern,’ the heart of this matter,” etc.
C. Overview statements
- Direct: “The theme of this lesson,” “the main point,” “the central concern,” “the heart of this matter,” etc.
- Providing a metaphor: “This novel can be understood in terms of tension between……,” “Equations are like a balance scale,” “The stock market crash of 1929 was like a downward spiral.”

D. Clarification of how students are expected to participate in the learning experience
- Direct: “I will explain each concept; you give me an example,” “listen to you partners first, then summarize their comments,”

6. Teaching the Lesson: Matching Purpose of Lesson with Appropriate Teaching Style

A. Using appropriate examples to clarity concepts or to model performance
- Provides metaphor: “You can think of a line as a single piece of string stretched tightly between two points.”
- Models: “let me show you how to hold the racket.”

B. Exploring student’s way of understanding new concepts (including use of dialogue)
- Questioning: “How would you describe this book to a friend?”
- Dialogue: Students initiate comments, direct comments to other students, evaluate their own comments, acknowledge others, and self-select themselves as speakers

C. Attending to different dimensions of primary socialization process (language, tacit knowledge, and historic and cross-cultural perspectives)
- Language/tacit knowledge: “Why do we use the term hard sciences?” “the term Far East?” “the term natural resources?”, etc.
- Historical: “How has this view changed over time?”
- Cross-cultural: “If we had grown up on a Indian Reservation, how might we see this…” “If we had grown up in the barrios of Los Angeles,” etc.

D. Sensitivity to cultural and gender differences among students
- Providing alternative metaphors/frames: “Let’s try to think about art as both beautiful and useful, or as both individual and social, or as both…”
- Making metaphor/pattern explicit: “Why do we so often joke about X?” “Why is this difficult for us to understand?”

E. Orchestrating student participation in a manner that involves all students
- “Give me examples,” “Do you have any questions,” “now it’s you turn to explain, tell us, list, outline, etc.”
14. Closure: Review and Providing for Continuity with Next Lesson

A. Clear summary of concepts that have been clarified, question, raised, and consensus achieved during lesson
   - “What were the main questions, issues, agreements, or disagreements that came up today?”
B. Brief overview statements of how concepts and performances relate to next lessons
   - “What we learned today we can use as a foundation, grounding, basis, platform, etc.,” “This chapter sets the state for…”

Guide #2 Primary Socialization

Refers to the complex and often overlooked process of communication whereby the student acquires from a teacher ways in which to think and talk about the social world. Students’ lacking a shared background of cultural experience or have already learned from different groups peers, parents, etc., the explanations provided by the teacher may not have an influence on the students. Language provides a schema or conceptual map for thinking. If teachers are not clear about this process, they are likely to make unconscious decisions that often have the effect of leaving students with a language framework that is inadequate for understanding the complexity of the culture they are leaning to think about.

1. Control of language in order to share conceptual schema, vocabulary, understanding.

   • Aspects of experience
     - Appropriate complexity: Comparisons: use of metaphors: (body as an organization or community)(Computer as brain and brain as a city or town)
     - Avoid being to abstract by clarifying vocabulary by using it with examples or other alternative vocabulary

   • Use vocabulary appropriate to maturity and cultural background of students
     - Teacher avoids language that reproduces cultural stereotypes
     - Establishes connections between vocabulary and student experience
       - Experience based: Can you give me an example from your own experience?
     - Uses metaphors appropriate to gender and cultural differences
• Culture and gender appropriate metaphors: Your examples clarify or demonstrate instead of you are on target or hit the mark.

2. Making Taken-for-Granted (TFG) Beliefs Explicit

A. Recognizes TFG beliefs and attitudes in curriculum material – Teacher calls attention to assumptions or presuppositions of textbook author, filmmaker, etc. “What does Chapter one imply about the relationship between science and tradition?”

B. Recognizes TFB beliefs in class discussion - use of assumptions or presuppositions of student beliefs: “Why do we connect understanding with the ability to see, as in terms like insight and vision?”

A. Recognizes teacher’s own TFG beliefs that are unconsciously shared - Teacher calls attention to his or her own assumptions or presuppositions: “I was taught to focus on the story and writing style, so I sometimes forget to consider the time and place in which the author lived.”

B. Recognizes TFG beliefs that communicate gender, age, or ethnic biases - Teacher call attention to implications/importance of assumed knowledge, “If we can only see this as a matter of business, then it’s difficult to recognize the family’s concern…”

3. Putting “Facts” in Historical Perspective

• Avoids leaving students with reified knowledge (knowledge that is represented as objective, factual, etc.) Teacher avoids pronouncements and declarative statements.

• Introduces a historical perspective (social origin of knowledge, facts, etc.) - Providing a cross-cultural perspective: “In asking about how we understand what it means to be an artist (or successful, intelligent, literate, a woman, man, son, daughter, etc.) Let me tell you a Chinese folk tale, an Indian proverb, …a Brazilian poem, etc.

Guide #3 The Metaphorical Basis of Thought

Metaphors are the primary source to introduce new concepts or skills into the classroom. New ideas are difficult to comprehend and are not easily understood on their own terms. The mental ecology of the classroom relies upon metaphorical thinking because they hold educational importance to reasoning. Analogic Thinking, Iconic Metaphors, Root Metaphors are all part of the introduction of historical or cross-cultural perspectives that teachers use in thought process. Classroom teachers know when and how to make implicit knowledge explicit.

1. Use of Analogic Metaphor in Introducing New Concepts Analogic Thinking (understanding the new in terms of the familiarity).
A. Avoids inappropriate generative metaphor (e.g., comparing organic with mechanical process
B. Explains the dissimilarities between what is being compared
C. Calls attention to the “as if” dimension of metaphorical thinking
D. Insures relevance of generative metaphor (reference point for understanding new concept) to student experience.
C. Displays sensitivity to cultural or gender bias contained in generative metaphors.

2. Role of Iconic Metaphor in Reproducing Past ways of Understanding
A. Calls attention to iconic metaphors that encode a pattern or schema for thinking that is now outmoded - Intelligence as IQ (culture-free), change as progress, the individual or species as unit of survival, the environment as resource.
B. Places iconic metaphor in historical context; “The ability to read in early America and in European countries was long associated with spiritual and religious life.”
A. Sensitive to how iconic metaphor encodes a culture – or gender-specific way of thinking - - Does this person define maturity in terms of independence, “learning in terms of individual achievement, “Science as politically neutral,” “language as a tool, “ Etc.

3. Making Root Metaphors Explicit as cultural world views or paradigms
A. Explains how patterns of thing, including taken-for- granted assumptions are grounded in a root metaphor –
B. Introduces a cross-cultural comparison into discussion in order to make root metaphor explicit – “This group of people or culture have different notions or understanding of art, leadership, economy, history,” etc.
C. Uses root metaphors appropriate for understanding current problems – Urban blight is often used in ways that put out of focus community; genetic engineering in ways that put our of focus ethical issues; home work in ways that put out focus intrinsic motivation.

Guide #4 Culturally Stereotyped Patterns of Thought and Values
Guide #5 Patterns of Thought Related to an Ecological Awareness
Guide #6 Mathematics Lesson
Mathematics learning for Native students is a new language and culture they need to bring into their cultural knowledge. The math lesson becomes a process of the primary relationship and thus involves the close interaction of Native culture, language, and thought processes. Success in teaching math to cultural diverse Native students is dependent upon being sensitive to the sequence within the schoolroom interactions.

A. Framework the Lesson

1. Framing the lesson is a critical step to make directions clear
   - The introduction involves a review of relevant concepts and the closure proves a summary as well as a sense of connectedness with the next lesson: “These exercises on graphing use what we have already learned about linear equations,” “We’ll come back next week to talk more about negative numbers.”

2. Provides a good overview of key concepts
   - “Let’s start today by looking at this chart, I’ll explain it, you’ll have a chance to ask questions, and we’ll finish up by solving some problems on the board.”

B. Primary Relationship

1. Avoids misrepresenting axioms, numbers, and operations as facts
   - In math we use the rational (or whole or real) number in a technical, not literal sense.

2. Provided historical perspective that enabled students to understand the connection between theories of mathematics and social development.
   - “The use of statistic developed in this context can be used for Native American health research”; “These types of equations become important to work in Native American gaming when…”

3. Recognizes the metaphors used in mathematics may have different means for Native American students
   - Consider, function, radical, revolution, relation, equals, etc.
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C. Organizing Public Environmental Setting: Cultural and Gender Issues

1. Avoids reinforcing cultural orientation towards competitive individualism

   - Competitive individualism is often conveyed through games and grading practices where one student’s gain in another student’s loss: “The first one finished with this exercise I’ll give extra points.”

   - A teacher encourages students to work together, “If I’m busy, you can ask someone setting nearby how they worked the problem”. “Today I’d like you to work with a partner on the chapter six exercises.

2. Creates a gender-fair classroom: Women and men represented equitably in pictures on the wall, organization of desks) including teachers) fosters cooperation and ease of communication among all participants.

   - Teachers note the contributions of women as well as men to mathematics, including such individuals as Madam Currie.

3. Avoids use of masculine oriented language, including the telling of sexist jokes and stories.

   - Including “you guys,” forms of locker room humor, over generalized use of masculine pronouns, and use of stereotyped example (e.g., women depicted only in domestic settings).

4. Avoids leaving students with impression that mathematically based knowledge is culturally neutral

   - “This is more than just a matter of logic and following the rules.” “Mathematicians don’t just lock themselves up in some little room somewhere…."

Guide #7 Science Lesson
Teaching of science involves unspoken learning that may influence both the Native student’s understanding of concepts and their attitude toward the role of science in their lives and their community. Modeling, coordinating social interactions, and being sensitive to culturally based misconceptions about the nature and limits of scientific knowledge are essential aspects of a positive classroom environment.

A. Creating an Atmosphere Conducive to learning

1. Models safe behavior in carrying out experimental and using equipment

   - Set the example by wearing protective glasses, gloves, or other protection when needed.
   - Handling of equipment (e.g., glass dishes, containers) chemicals, electricity, plants, and animals should always be shown in safe practices and respect.
   - Good Stewardship should be shown as models of concern and value for living organisms in the classroom.
   - Plants, animals, and equipment
   - Have

Guide #8 Nonverbal Patterns of Communication
Guide #9 Orchestration of Student Involvement
Guide #10 Gender as a Dimension of Classroom Relationships
Guide #11 Cultural Appropriate Participation Patterns

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