

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Education: Designing Networks That Transform Schools

reviewed by Charmion B. Rush

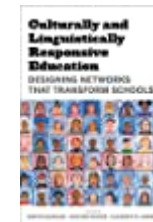
Title: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Education: Designing Networks That Transform Schools

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In *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Education*, the question is posed, “Do I really need another book?” Based on my review, the answer is... Absolutely, yes! At a time when the demographic divide is more prevalent than ever and in the face of evidence of an expanding achievement gap among students who are traditionally minoritized, this book provides a foundation of how to bridge divisions for bilateral and bilingual learners. This book serves as practical resource for all education stakeholders wanting and willing to create change. *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Education* is an exemplar of what’s right in our schools. Particularly, what’s right in a network of two dozen preK-8 Catholic schools across the United States that have adopted a two-way immersion model (TWI) to educate English Learners (EL) within an inclusive environment.

Specifically, *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Education* provides a foundation for how change agents can better educate the new mainstream to serve diverse and multilingual communities. By examining a comprehensive service delivery model centered on cultural responsiveness, the book provides guidance to promote sociocultural competence, value for diversity, and effective curriculum and instruction for EL. Based on a theory of action and a community of practice, the text provides clear and applicable ideas to create systematic opportunities for learning.

Founded on Scanlan, Hunter, and Howard’s (2019) expertise on cultural responsiveness and the social context of education, the authors challenge us to explore the effective service delivery model used for TWI schools. The authors provide empirical evidence to support the idea that, when designed well and implemented with fidelity, TWIs can help all students develop bilingualism, biliteracy, and sociocultural competence (p. 8) to attain strong academic outcomes.

Collectively, there are three parts to the format and design of the text. Each section provides the blueprint for creating and sustaining growth and student achievement for the bilingual and bilateral learner.

Part One begins with Chapter One, “Embracing the New Mainstream Through Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Schooling,” which provides the rationale for implementing two-way immersion. The authors speak to the practicality of using a spectrum of service delivery models to educate students designated as ELs.

Chapter Two describes ways in which “A Theory of Action,” a mental map illustrating our understanding about how the world works and how to enact change, is explored (p. 9). For example, theories relating to culturally and linguistically responsive schools and organizational learning are considered to promote a theory of action. Likewise, the authors evaluate effective infrastructures (i.e., mission, governance, and resources) to promote organizational teams and units.

There are six chapters within Part Two that provide practices for change. Each chapter is authored by practicing faculty, mentors, or other bilingual experts in the field who journeyed from being monolingual to bilingualism and multiculturalism. This section is distinctive in that it draws from the experience of various schools in the process of transforming to become more culturally and linguistically responsive. Evidence of this transformative journey is chronicled through conversations, fidelity assurances, professional developments, teacher reflections, family engagements, and leadership.

Chapter Three describes the role in managing organizational changes by engaging in critical conversations about the process of culturally responsive schools. Maslowski comments on how having critical conversations helped TWI members evolve into culturally responsive communities. This included addressing the technical problems and adaptive challenges for educational advancements.

Chapter Four describes fidelity, or the guiding principles and intentional assurances for a successful program. Ladas organized his transformative journey from exploration (in which service models were chosen) to installation (in which fidelity assurances were established) through the implementation of scaffolded and strategic networks.

Chapter Five delves into how coordinated professional developments help to sustain, integrate, and apply learning for successful TWI schools. According to Yaden, the persistent and intentional act of providing professional developments is the key for success. As noted, “When many more individuals, operating across diverse contexts, are drawn together in a shared learning enterprise, the capacity grows exponentially” (p. 92).

In Chapter Six, Zisselsberger and Gonzalez examine the need for teachers to become self-reflective practitioners in their instruction and knowledge of practice. One conceptual process explored is the “Teach, Reflect, Learn” approach for self-reflection. Within this cyclic approach, teacher capacity is built through an awareness of teacher practices, then a call to act with intention, followed by an assessment of student growth. The chapter also explores the importance of having purposeful dialogues and critical conversations about learning, collecting and assessing baseline data to document growth, as well as building teacher capacity through reflective writing.

Chapter Seven explores on the most valuable resource for a sustainable network, the building of authentic relationships through family engagement. Per Sarker, it is important to employ families in the decision-making process. This is especially true for families from diverse cultural and linguistic heritages because the establishment of trust, respect, and joint responsibility is imperative to improve student achievements. Parental engagement and involvement is also necessary for educational leaders to promote their agendas and cultivate funds of knowledge.

Lastly, in Chapter Eight, Alanis and Rodriguez describe how culturally and linguistically responsive leadership and distributed leadership are connected. For educational leaders, the intentional distribution of power ensures stronger curricular practices, families, and community partnerships.

In Part Three, the final two chapters are pinpointed for self-reflections and useful insights for implementing culturally responsive TWI schools.

Chapter Nine examines the practical role TWIs have played in transforming communities. Specifically, the chapter discusses how established communities of practice (COPs) have affected the individual, community, and organization. The exploration of COPs is significant for educational leaders' desire for adapting and advancing the culturally responsive service delivery model. At the heart of this chapter, the examination of barriers and relational networks among multiple hubs highlights the transitions necessary for organizing the network, cultivating resources (personally and structurally), and establishing governance.

Chapter Ten, "Looking Forward: Transformation Across Contexts," is an introspective chapter for educational leaders to advance the process of transformation. Three lessons are highlighted:

Lesson 1: Affirm diversity through an asset-based orientation. This includes instilling in others an appreciation of multiple, divergent, and generative manifestations of capital (human, social, and decisional capital).

Lesson 2: Audaciously articulate your theory of action. The intentional act of leaders being straightforward to advance their mission, as well as being aspirational, inspirational, and sophisticated when describing their theory of action.

Lesson 3: Leverage networking. This is characterized by the utilization of strategic and scaffolded networking.

In addition, it is important to note that the authors provide text features such as charts, diagrams, and tables to highlight the significance of content. Throughout the book, examples of learning in action are thematically organized. This feature is particularly useful for understanding the perspectives of the immersion model and illustrating research and practice.

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