SPORTS SCIENCES AND MULTICULTURALISM AS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT CONSTITUENTS

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to familiarize the social (sports) sciences educators with the pedagogic concept and professional benefits and awareness of multicultural education if implemented in sports sciences curricula, especially in the efforts to obtain international transparency through sports science literature writing and publishing, and efficient knowledge management. It is widely urged for a modification of traditional multicultural education toward a critical multiculturalism to promote democratic initiatives in curriculum, pedagogy, and social relations in the schools (McLaren, 2003). Data were collected through textbook chapters and articles searched through the archives of Diversity Digest and Academic Medicine for the years 2010 to 2015 with the key words multiculturalism, diversity, cultural competence, education, learning and knowledge management. Synthesized data were used to present a rational argument for the inclusion of a critical pedagogy into the field of sports science education hoping it would facilitate knowledge management. The infrastructure in the professional field of sports sciences, review of the literature on critical multicultural theory and pedagogy, and the potential cognitive and intellectual implications of diversity and multicultural education were analyzed. Objectives of a critical multicultural approach include: (1) altering traditional student-teacher power relations; (2) emphasizing and nurturing an appreciation for diversity and global processes; and (3) facilitating a democratic and inclusive classroom environment. Overall, practicing critical multiculturalism in the classroom alters the traditional student-teacher power relations, nurtures an appreciation for an understanding of diversity, and empowers students to think critically about the world and the society they live in. The critical aspect of this perspective of multiculturalism is found in its move beyond the goals of a promotion of pluralism and an appreciation of diversity to providing students with the tools to critique the relationship between power and knowledge and the related discourses that hold down certain members of society. Conclusions focus on possible various and creative strategies for implementing a multicultural agenda in sports sciences curricula and on the analysis of the associated benefits and outcomes of such educational strategies that would remarkably contribute to a real time knowledge management. The process of becoming a multiculturally competent teacher includes the commitment to denounce stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination, as well as racist attitudes and ethnocentric biases toward transformative actions at school and in society as well, which may lead to problems in traditional classrooms where multicultural educational issues are not addressed.
Keywords: diversity, multiculturalism, sports sciences, professionalism, knowledge management

1. INTRODUCTION

Historically, multicultural studies have encouraged us to advocate traditionally underrepresented and excluded cultures and to consider them in their own right rather than through the lens of any single culture (Giroux, 1983). Critical multicultural education encourages students to see in a variety of ways so that they may begin to understand the complex web of intersectional and intercultural relationships in the United States and other countries as well. Contemporary scholars have called for a modification of traditional multicultural education toward a critical multiculturalism that seeks to promote democratic initiatives in curriculum, pedagogy, and social relations in the schools (McLaren, 2003).

Critical multiculturalism promotes understanding and participating in a diverse society and supports the efforts directed toward attaining social, cultural and emotional harmony. From the critical-radical perspective, racial and ethnocentric biases are not only requestioned but also involved in transformative actions regarding all aspects of educational practices and social changes that are pluriethnic, pluricultural, democratic, equitable, and inclusive. Hence, from the critical-radical perspective, the world must change. The process of becoming a multiculturally competent teacher includes the commitment to denounce stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination, as well as racist attitudes and ethnocentric biases toward transformative actions at school and in society, which may lead to problems in traditional classrooms where multicultural educational issues are not addressed.

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A critical approach to multicultural reform needs to make salient connections between knowledge and power. Such an approach would bring the entire range of traditional and contemporary arrangements within schools, and between schools and communities, into focus for reexamination with a view toward transformation. Thus, in both theory and practice, the ideas of critical pedagogy are a part of critical multiculturalism (McLaren, 2003).

2. CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Critical pedagogy is concerned with the use of power in the teaching and learning dynamic, such as what knowledge is produced and by whom it is selected. It is also concerned with ways to provide students with means to resist oppression, improve their lives, and strengthen the democratic process for everyone, thus insuring progressive social change and social justice. According to McLaren (2003), critical pedagogy is concerned with a critique of society, around issues of power and developing students' critical abilities to work toward the transformation of society. McLaren also suggests that critical pedagogy focuses on the relationship between educational ideas, policies, practices, and larger oppressive political and ideological perspectives. Teachers using this approach engage students in critical questioning of their own beliefs and assumptions (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1992). Since Freire's revolutionary work Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), radical (critical/feminist/multicultural) educators have endeavored to change the face of education by democratizing the student-teacher power relations into a more emancipatory form and by including the work and experiences of previously under- or unrepresented groups (Giroux, 1988a).

McLaren (1994) elaborates on the concept of critical pedagogy that "should conceive of reality— most importantly classroom reality—as a multiplicity of social relations, embodied metaphors, and social structures which cohere and contradict, some of them oppressive and some of them liberating" (p. 201). Perceiving the classroom reality in this way creates an avenue for each individual teacher to address how his or her "self" potentially becomes an embodied metaphor in the course of teacher-student interactions. In terms of implementation, Grossberg's (1994) model of a progressive pedagogical project is outlined below:

1. Hierarchical pedagogical. A practice that assumes the teacher already understands the truth to be imparted to the students.

2. Dialogic practice.

3. Praxical pedagogy.

According to Grossberg, praxical pedagogy "attempts to offer people the skills that would enable them to understand and intervene into their own history" (1994, p. 17). In the area of allied health care providers charged with the prevention, recognition, management, treatment, and rehabilitation of injury and illness in the physically active, we must become skilled clinical practitioners. This ability includes, among other things, the possession of expert psychomotor skills and their interpretation, as well as the ability to expertly analyze and synthesize the various clinical abnormalities and dysfunctions common to active people. Development of the latter skill, the ability to recognize case-pattern presentations, requires a certain level of intellectual, clinical, and scientific maturity. As such, one of the central tenets of athletic training education should be to demonstrate and foster this higher-level thinking ability in all of our students.

Kogler presented an interesting argument for diversifying the curriculum, one that parallels the goals and intellectual challenges of allied health education. In this unique and fascinating endorsement of diversity education, he argued that a diversified curriculum has a positive impact on students, institutions, and the society at large and that our increasingly diverse society requires our educated professionals and leaders to be critically aware of the connection between social problems and race, class, sex, and other forms of diversity. Combining the pedagogy and practice of multicultural education with recent developments and insights in cognitive science and the philosophy of the mind in a very coherent manner, Kogler suggested that multicultural education advances cognitive capabilities in students. This enhanced cognitive ability enables students to genuinely understand different cultural perspectives, to develop a reflexive understanding of themselves, and to represent structures shared by individuals in different experiential contexts.

Kogler's central thesis was essentially that the actual thought processes provoked and unleashed by multicultural education can be seen as instantiations of deeper cognitive thought processes. According to this theory, the process of awakening the mind's eye and sparking the cerebral circuitry that is set in motion with multicultural exposure

allows the recipients to see themselves in a very different light. This cognitive catharsis, in turn, enables the individual to better understand the plight and perspective of others. Like a rare and exotic orchid, if cultivated properly, this process allows the student to see and hear, with distinct clarity, the various truths and fallacies that surround our history, society, and culture. It allows the student to critically examine the past and present states of social injustice and "democratic" policy that have existed in the United States and other countries at varying levels for more than 400 years.

This ever-evolving and highly plastic configuration process, which Kogler identified as the ability to apply a theory of mind, effectively enables and empowers the individual to think at much higher intellectual levels. Through implicit or explicit means, we can make better sense of others by simulating or by employing the notion of empathy in order to understand others by putting ourselves in their shoes. The ability to do this openly, critically, and without bias requires higher levels of cognitive understanding and processing. Kogler concluded by commenting that the most gratifying and shocking experience for the majority of white students of multicultural education is that they learn to see themselves as culturally, socially, and historically situated selves. Or, to put it bluntly, they actually begin to realize that they too have an ethnicity. This theoretic construct certainly has implications for all university learning, including athletic training education and the ability to develop sound, mature clinical-reasoning skills.

3. EXPERIMENTAL SUPPORT
Experimental support for Kogler's theory can be found in the work of Guthrie et al. on cognitive capabilities, racism, and tolerance. Building on previous research connecting educational level and tolerance for diversity, the authors have attempted to examine how education affected tolerance in college-aged students. Specifically, they intended to examine whether students' levels of intellectual development, represented by their respective levels of reflective thinking, were correlated with levels of prejudice toward African Americans and homosexuals and levels of tolerance. Tolerance has been operationally defined as "the ability to accept individuals for who they are, to appreciate and respect differences, and to empathize."

Building upon previous research in stereotyping and prejudice, and the Reflective Judgment Model (as cited in an earlier, 1994 work by King and Kitchener), Guthrie et al. defined reflective thinking as "…the capacity to make defensible judgments about complex and controversial issues." This theory of intellectual development describes a progression in reasoning skills that takes time, cognitive capacity, and careful nurturing in order to mature properly. As students move from lower to higher stages of learning and understanding, the complexity, sophistication, and comprehensiveness of the judgment process gradually increases. As experiences and varieties of perspectives mount, students progressing through the Reflective Judgment Model are increasingly faced with the complex task of evaluating their knowledge claims and defending their points of view on controversial issues.

Students operating in the early stages of this model (traditional undergraduate students) are said to be in the pre-reflective or quasi-reflective models of thinking. Typically, first-year and even second-year athletic training students exist and operate in this cognitive realm. Reason and thinking are based on the assumption that one gains knowledge through direct, personal observation or through authority figures. In effect, knowledge gained is correct and certain if it comes from an "authoritative source," and the process by which it is gained is passive and rather "a-cognitive." Stereotypes and the pre-reflective judgments that are activated by the formulated stereotypes are similar phenomena according to Guthrie et al. who argued that they are both based on the "…authority of society or common belief, assumed to be correct, and not questioned."

4. RESULTS
As students mature intellectually, they pass into the quasi-reflective mode of thinking and begin to recognize that knowledge claims about ill-structured problems contain elements of judgment. They begin to have the intuitive ability to question what they learn but do not yet have the cognitive tools and experiences to make complete sense of complex issues. Thus, they often do not have the confidence to confront their internal dilemmas, and so they can persist, perpetuate, and perplex even further.

At this stage, the learner is now more likely to recognize that a stereotype is an inappropriate criterion upon which to base a judgment. Unfortunately, the learner at this stage does not yet have the cognitive tools to prevent stereotype-based reactions and behavioral patterns from manifesting themselves in discreet and even some open situations. Older, more intellectually mature students are usually in the true reflective-thinking stage, characterized by an ability to recognize that their understanding of the world is not "given" and that it requires active construction, critical debate, and subsequent transformation.

Reflective thinkers can appreciate that knowledge needs to be understood in the context in which it is generated, that is, within and from the text of their experiences and cognitions. This critically reflective and contextual state represents a state that genuinely passionate teachers aspire to in their students and one that health care students must

arrive at if they wish to develop effective clinical-reasoning and problem-solving skills. In an attempt to study this theoretic relationship further, Guthrie et al. hypothesized that the ability to inhibit a stereotypic response was related to the level of intellectual development in the student.

After studying 48 university students ranging from freshmen undergraduates to doctoral-level students, they found that intellectual development was significantly related to levels of prejudice toward African Americans and homosexuals and overall tolerance. In contrast, higher levels of prejudice and lower levels of tolerance were found in individuals who demonstrated lower levels of intellectual development. Interestingly, all subjects who scored below the mean value on levels of tolerance demonstrated levels of thinking at or below (pre-reflective) the quasi-reflective level. It appeared that the quasi-reflective level of thinking was the "cutoff point" for developing a more tolerant opinion of other, diverse people and ideas.

In their conclusion, the authors argued that their findings offer preliminary evidence of tolerance for diversity being related to a student's level of reflective judgment. That is, a student's intellectual maturity and depth will have a profound effect on the ways he or she approaches and resolves complex, ill-structured problems, including racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and justice.

5. CONCLUSION

Results of these unique and fascinating studies suggest that efforts within higher education to develop and build students' reflective-thinking ability, both in and out of the classroom and across disciplines, can have a strong, positive, and corollary impact on levels of tolerance and prejudice toward other groups. When observed in context with Kogler's model, one can surmise that teaching diversity can improve intellectual development and higher-level thinking, just as teaching critical and reflective thinking through other means and methods can improve levels of tolerance and social awareness.

Incidentally, similar results have also been found with advanced mathematics and science students who have been involved in comprehensive multicultural educational experiences. In the words of Chang, who found experimental support for the same phenomenon in his own work, "…enhancing students' ability to think critically about class differences, for example, will also improve one's ability to appreciate cultural pluralism and to analyze inequalities that are manifested through racial, gender, or sexual orientation differences." If this process is done openly, patiently, and systematically, the binary goals of optimizing intellectual maturity and tolerance can be promoted and achieved in a complex, yet simple, symbiotic, and cyclic process of learning and development.

Let us suppose that teaching athletic training students to think critically about the complex interplay at work between subjective and objective information, between a particular abnormality and its clinical manifestation, and between the evaluation and rehabilitation processes will indirectly help them become more reflective and critical in their thinking. Perhaps this development will indirectly lead to higher levels of tolerance and lower levels of prejudice toward other ethnic groups. Alternatively, perhaps instilling and developing a genuine appreciation and mastery of critical multicultural issues will help with the development of physical and cognitive skills pertaining to the medical and human sciences.

Results show that Kogler was right in stating that by enhancing our students' intellectual development we can help create a sense of simulation and thus create an opaque perspective of oneness in our students. Let us hope that this skill of the "assimilability" will help them to better relate to, communicate with, and appreciate all of their respective classmates, colleagues, patients, and community comrades as they progress with their academic, professional, and social lives.

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