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"Heritage Rocks": Principles and Best Practices of Effective Intercultural Teaching and Learning

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This portrayal of the intercultural teaching/learning culture and classroom stories at one fully multicultural institution, Heritage University, itself reflecting many diverse "heritages," provides a glimpse into the faces of the future of higher education in America. We offer several examples and a synthesis of the principles and best practices of effective intercultural teaching and learning, with the intention of helping other institutions move intercultural education from the margins to the "center," thereby preparing both teachers and learners for effective intercultural learning and living in the 21st century.

Do something the first day of class to establish an inclusive and interactive tone for the class. . . . Know your story and your students' stories.
—Faculty member

Students don't care what you know as much as they need to know you care and respect them and their cultures.
—Faculty member

I like the cultural sensitivity here. As a new student, I feel welcome and can be who I am. I can concentrate on education.
—Student

There were several different cultures in the class, and I felt mine was right up there with everyone else's. Because of the final project, I was

able to embrace myself as a person, open up to other people, and learn from their cultures and mine.

—Student

Under a full moon in the midst of harvested hops fields and apple orchards, it is an early evening in mid-November. Mary has invited Peter to teach some African-American history and culture to her Communication 305 course. Comm. 305 (and 105 for new students), together known as the "Heritage Core," is a combined intensive writing and cultural awareness course required of all students. Typical of this Hispanic-serving, multicultural institution on the Yakama Nation Indian reservation in central Washington, in the class are the faces of the future: seven Latinos/Latinas, themselves a mixture of *Espana y Indios*; two Yakama Natives; three with mixed Native American heritages; four ethnically blended white Euro-Americans; and one Pacific Islander.

Knowing Mary's success helping Heritage students understand and value their own and other cultures, Peter asks the students (think-pair-share) to "take a moment of reflection and write down the one or two most essential things you have learned about intercultural communication in the course so far." As they reflect on the task and talk with someone nearby, Peter readies a video clip of an inspiring black women's gospel chorus group, "Sojourner" from Indiana University's "Ancestral Spirits." After only 10 minutes, we debrief the student reflections. With an energy akin to gospel music, the students "rock" with stunning insights, comments, and personal stories. With surprising unanimity, they state (in our words) the following essential principles of intercultural awareness, understanding, and communication.

- That racial prejudice is brought about by ignorance and by fears of the unknown, fears of those different from oneself.
- That students, like all people, are limited by their fears and by their ethnocentric points of view, but that this is fixable with knowledge and intercultural contact.
- That they have learned to see, appreciate, and respect the diverse cultures and cultural context of others and to value the uniqueness of those cultures.
- That they also see and understand the universal commonalities of the human condition across cultural differences; they value both uniqueness and universality.
- That more and more Americans, including many in that class, are both struggling with and celebrating their blended, bi- or tri-cultural ethnicity

and identities. Which of us does not live in and negotiate at least two worlds within us?

- That it is important not to reduce persons to their ethnic or racial identity because all of us have multiple cultural identities (including also gender, socioeconomic status, age, religion, region, race, sexuality, ableness, etc.).

Against this background of impressive understanding, the class then listens to two exuberant black gospel songs of praise, thanksgiving, and hope, responding with feelings, thoughts, their own stories, then making two more crucial intercultural points.

- That despite experiencing histories of oppression and victimization, all social groups have found in their cultural traditions courageous and creative means of achieving self-empowering dignity, such as the affirmations of gospel.
- That staying stuck in a victimization view—by whites or by people of color—ennobles none of us. Hope in the human spirit and in cross-cultural understanding and interaction, as Tatum argues (1997), is essential.

Purpose, Context, and Approach

What kind of teaching leads to such admirable intercultural understanding? This chapter is intended to convey a portrait of the essential principles and best practices of effective intercultural teaching and learning in a multicultural university whose student profile reflects the changing class, cultural, and color composition of the United States. Heritage University was founded by Dr. Kathleen Ross in 1982 with the mission of providing “quality, accessible higher education to multicultural populations which have been educationally isolated” (Heritage University, 2004, p. 2). Undergraduate Heritage students are 54% Hispanic (mostly Mexican American farm worker families), 12% Native, 31% white, and 3% African American and Asian, percentages that reflect the demographics of the Yakima Valley. In different proportions, they also increasingly reflect the changing demographics of the nation, including increasing numbers of blended ethnicities. With an average age of 31, 70% of the students are women, most of whom are working poor; many are single parents and English language learners.

Heritage University is therefore a multicultural laboratory—and perhaps a model—of intercultural education. One of our general education learning outcomes specifies four competencies for working and living in a multicul-

tural society. One of six key characteristics (and assessment criterion) of the effective faculty member is one who actively values and celebrates the diverse cultures represented by our students. These goals and criteria, as education professor Pam Root said in a recent faculty workshop, are "not just articulated but also actualized in practice." Data from the 2004 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), based on student self-reporting, shows that entering freshman at Heritage, largely because they come from majority single-ethnicity high schools, scored half as high as other Hispanic-serving institutions on items such as "understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds," "had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own," and "worked with other students on projects during class." Seniors, by contrast, scored *four* times higher than freshmen in each of these areas. The Heritage senior results exceeded that of other Hispanic-serving institutions as well as predominately white institutions in the NSSE sample.

The university mission specifically encourages intercultural engagement not only across cultures on campus but also in "grass-roots community involvement" aimed at the "special needs of multicultural and rural or isolated constituencies" (Heritage University, 2004, p. 3); that is, the Native, Hispanic, Filipino, Japanese, and Anglo cultures of the valley. Virtually every Heritage student completes at least one service-learning project and most do several projects. NSSE data confirm high scores on "contributing to the welfare of your community." A required community-based assignment in Comm. 105 and 305 sets the tone, and service-learning continues across all disciplines and professional programs, as we shall see.

Concern for others starts on campus. Heritage faculty encourage students to work with support partners and in study groups, teaching each other and helping with missed work. Student support for each other's learning is an essential part of the Heritage culture, especially given the frequency of challenges students face with extensive work schedules, single parenthood, car breakdowns, sick children, and family addictions. Students also create their own groups. Mary Anne Quahapama, a Yakama woman and recent graduate, reported that "the only way I made it through" statistics was "six of us stayed around after class and talked about what we did and didn't understand." Guided by the university motto "Knowledge Brings Us Together," there is an almost total absence of competition among students.

As reflected by the student response to Peter's question in Mary's Comm. 305 class, Heritage students come to know the university mission, celebrate it, and thoroughly expect to be engaged in intercultural contact and learning in almost every class. This chapter describes several faculty strategies for intercultural student learning that achieve these goals across the disciplines—in the

arts and sciences as well as professional programs. Our title, with its intended double meaning, comes from a t-shirt that Heritage business students, with obvious pride, recently designed and sold. The shirt, intermixing on a black background white and red images of the Heritage logo, diverse student faces, and rock star Jimi Hendrix, is headed by the words “HERITAGE ROCKS.”

Some definitions may be helpful. We define the term *multicultural* as a descriptor of the changing population of the nation’s classrooms, and the term *intercultural* as the actual dynamic, difficult interactions among multiple diverse students in those classrooms. Aware of the literature on intercultural education (e.g., Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Border & Chism, 1992; Frederick, 1995; Millem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Ouellett, 2005; Tatum, 1997), we conclude that the principles and best practices of effective intercultural learning and teaching are virtually identical to the principles and best practices of *any* effective teaching and learning, but that the slight differences are instructive. Neither of us is an educational researcher, although Peter has been an active faculty developer and higher education consultant for 30 years, and Mary headed the Academic Skills Center at Heritage for 15 years. We are both primarily teachers, Mary in English and communication, Peter in history and American cultural studies.

Our research approach is humanistic, qualitative, naturalistic inquiry (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As opposed to empirical positivist paradigms, naturalistic inquiry emphasizes holistic, ethnographic realities rooted in natural contexts featuring the real-life experiences and stories of participants—that is, our Heritage colleagues and students. We are ourselves part of that context and we interact with others naturally every day, grounding our study on classroom research and other forms of feedback from students, informal classroom observations, qualitative surveys, workshops, and our colleagues’ stories of teaching and learning. Our conversations occur in one-to-one, in-depth interviews and in casual meetings in hallways, college paths, and in the cafeteria—that is, in naturalistic ways. In diverse settings we have essentially asked the same basic questions: What’s working best to help your students’ learning? What’s hindering their learning? In what ways did the intercultural mix of students matter? Would you tell a story about a recent intercultural moment in one of your classes?

Intercultural Learning in a Storytelling Culture

We recently heard such a story from Steve Camerer, a writing and reading teacher working with English language learners in the pre-college program.

When asked what, in his experience, worked best to help his students' learning, he thought for a while, then said, "Understand where they are coming from—their histories, cultures, even pop culture—and bring it into class." Then he told a story about the day he was teaching students how to paraphrase a passage.

I had asked them to pick a song of their choice and paraphrase it. I was used to a 40%–50% success rate in accurate, well-written paraphrasing, but with this one I had an 80%–90% success rate. They wrote about something that meant something to them.

Thus, Steve went right to the heart of a crucial principle of learning: Connect learning goals with students' inner worlds. Shulman (1999) has written,

we now understand that learning is a dual process in which . . . the inside beliefs and understandings must come out, and only then can something outside get in. . . . The first influence on learning is [what's] already inside the learner. (p. 12)

Heritage teachers intentionally focus learning on what we know about our students. We teach on Yakama Nation lands in the shadow of sacred Mt. Adams (*Pahto*). Five generations of English-speaking, white migrants blend with three generations of Mexican and Asian migrant labor families, all living among native people who have been here "since time immemorial." From this convergence of peoples, Heritage inherits a storytelling culture. President Ross, whose field is intercultural education, leads an effort to capture and transform this shared inheritance of storytelling traditions. The intent is to translate informal oral memories into a formal learning methodology for integrating knowledge and experience. At monthly breakfasts sponsored by the president, staff and faculty tell stories about family backgrounds, migration routes, work experiences, and significant people who drive the different and similar challenges, fears, hopes, and aspirations in their lives. The annual retreat for faculty and staff features life stories by members of the Heritage community, and faculty workshops often examine the role of stories in learning by connecting student lives with important course goals.

This use of classroom stories is consistent with the growing body of literature on the role of emotions in learning and its inextricable connection with the intellect. Building on the work of Kolb (1983), Damasio (1994), and LeDoux (1996), Zull (2002) has shown that deep learning depends on the interplay of affect and cognition in which learners process information first in the inner (limbic) emotional centers of the brain and then make reasoned connections and meaning in the cognitive, integrative centers of the outer

cortex (Zull, 2002). Stories, Zull says, “engage all parts of the brain” (p. 228), which makes them key to accessing emotions where “learning is deepest” (p. 228). Therefore, he says, “you can see the value of stories for the teacher. We should tell stories, create stories, and repeat stories; and we should ask our students to do the same” (p. 228).

At Heritage, we base storytelling not only on Zull and others (Coles, 1989; Schank, 1990; Witherell & Noddings, 1991) but also on the Native American medicine wheel, a model for holistic learning integrating mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions of the self and therefore of learning (Frederick, 1991). Stories are an essential part of Comm. 305 (and 105), designed in 1999 as the centerpiece of the curriculum by a campus team headed by President Ross, Provost Sneh Veena, Mary James, and other faculty members. Students begin the course with short writing on what they already know about their own cultures’ norms and values, then do a storytelling group activity in which students choose one of four animals with which they identify. Each of the animals (rabbit, eagle, turtle, or coyote) has cultural significance in the major American ethnic cultures represented in the class. Finally, students then break up into their respective “animal” groups to discuss the reasons for their choice and make a matrix of the comparisons and contrasts between their animal’s characteristics and those of the other three. In the debriefing, students introduce themselves through their animal stories and present their matrices. The follow-up writing assignment draws out intercultural communication concepts of stereotyping, in-group and out-group, and the importance of seeing similarities and differences across and within groups.

The course continues emphasizing the journey from ethnocentricity to empathy through readings, class discussions, examination of the internal and external aspects of cultures, and service-learning projects. In addition to frequent writing assignments, students make cultural identity collages or drawings and share the stories with their service-learning groups. They choose mentors who help them deepen their understanding of career, family background, personal self-identity, and another culture. Guest speakers from the major cultures in the Yakima Valley present their personal journeys, telling of barriers experienced and conquered. Inspired by a talk by Miguel Puente, director of the College Assistance for Migrants Program and a Heritage core instructor, one student wrote, “I realized I have two contradictory cultures living inside me: a majority culture (Mexican in Mexico) and a minority culture (Mexican in the United States). All non-white immigrants living in the United States have to contend with being an ‘other.’”

"Hearing each other's voices," Mary says, "we all grow." Student voices testify to their feelings/thoughts about the class. A young Euro-American student said, "Before enrolling in this class, I didn't care to understand others and their cultures; I was very ethnocentric. But I have started to look at things differently over the last two months." A self-identified "Mexican" wrote that he came into the class with feelings of inadequacy and "hate," but learned that "culture and identity are filters for how we see the world, and that I myself who had felt a victim of discrimination was also criminal because I unconsciously created [prejudice] in my own small world." Most students describe these kinds of transformations in themselves: "This class has really opened my eyes to my own biases. I have had to reexamine my perceptions of others" and "This class has taught me to be more observant in how I treat others and how my reactions to other cultures need to be more empathetic."

Peter's approach to American history survey courses, starting with Native cultures and the Spanish in Mexico and the southwest (in contrast to the usual New England-centered approach), also uses student stories as a way of exploring cultures and connecting student lives to historical content and themes. For example, in teaching about agriculture-based cultures, he asks students first to tell stories from their own experience about what land-owning farmers and farm workers most need, want, and fear. Within minutes, the board is filled with a rich, detailed socioeconomic and human set of facts and concepts about agriculture, bringing textbook pages alive with meaning derived from the students' own farm labor, land-owning, and land-losing life experiences.

In both surveys and advanced courses about Native and Mexican American history, Peter, like Mary, uses student stories to explore their various multiple identities. A recent class on the Native American boarding school experience led to an intense discussion of the costs and benefits of assimilation and the many variations of student bicultural identities. We also look at the blurred meaning of "borders," both metaphorical and real, in American history. Students tell stories about the meaning of *la frontera* in their lives. What does a border mean to Mexicans, whose young nation after independence in 1821 once included all of the southwest from California and Texas to Oregon, and whose rights were once promised protection by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848? What does a border line mean to the Apache and Tohono O'odham of the southwest, or the Lummi, Ojibwe, Blackfeet, and Mohawk tribes along the Canadian-American border of the North, or to the Yakama with guaranteed treaty rights from 1855 to hunt and fish "in all the usual and accustomed places"?

Informed by these wider explorations of borders and *mestizahe* blended ethnicities in all cultures, including various hyphenated Euro-Americans, students tell stories about their families. Each course concludes with training in conducting oral history interviews as part of writing a family history and making a poster presentation. The pride in their projects is palpable. "I thought it was awesome putting . . . items that represented my parents on the poster, and they were excited helping me with the project." The assignment respects the importance of extended families in Native and Mexican American traditions. It also helps many students connect not only with family and the larger themes of American history, but also with themselves. A Native woman explains,

Because of this challenging final project, I was able to embrace myself as a Native person and open up to other people and learn from their historical memories. I was afraid at first, thinking I would personally defeat myself and back out of the project, solely because I hated my past. But when I listened to another person tell their story, and learned of their struggles, their memories of overcoming adversity, I realized that I was not alone. I felt more confident about the person I am becoming and how to use the past as a tool and learning experience.

Engaging Diverse Students in Diverse Disciplines and Professional Programs

Learning insights such as these happen as a result of intercultural engagement across all disciplines and professional programs. In the humanities, Loren Schmidt, chair of English and humanities, works with students to produce a literary magazine, *Pahto's Shadow*, which is posted online and distributed throughout the Valley. Heritage arts professors hold an Arts Day at the end of each semester in which students exhibit paintings, masks, and ceramic pieces, read poetry, perform multicultural dances, sing, and perform dramatic scenes, the casting intentionally race and gender blind. Thus, in *Sara Crewe*, an English story, the characters were all played by Latinos/Latinas, while in *Spirit of Hispania*, a series of Mexican folktales, most characters were white. *Cinderella: The World's Favorite Fairy Tale* presented the story from the point of view of different cultures. The Chinese Cinderella was played by a Swede, the Russian by a Latina, and the Native American by an African-American Nez Perce with multi-ethnic sisters. The witch was a willing white male.

As theatre instructor Linda Walker explains, "Through drama a participant learns about other cultures, not about what they eat, but how individuals perceive and deal with self, life, and the human condition on a daily basis. They learn what it's like to be someone else," thus gaining cultural understanding. In addition, as Levine and Cureton (1998) and many others have discovered, students break down cultural barriers when engaged together in common tasks, whether in theater, choral groups, or athletic teams. A white adjunct teacher who has lived on the Yakama reservation her entire life, Linda uses creative, improvisational process drama courses to help students develop language skills, interpersonal understanding, and the ability to analyze character and social history. All drama, she says, "is listening to what the other person is saying." Theatre helps students overcome shyness and gain "a sense of inner value and self-worth," Linda points out. "I didn't know I could do this" and "I learned a lot about myself" are comments she hears most frequently. "I lost my shyness," one said, "not totally, but I feel better about myself." And another said the drama class "gave me the opportunity to work in skills I didn't know I had."

Confidence building, combined with a tough, entrepreneurial approach, is at the heart of the business program. As business chair Len Black puts it, when the goal is to educate confident business professionals, "traditional methods do not work with nontraditional students." Teaching is done through real-world projects. The most recent among many joint faculty and student entrepreneurial ventures is the Peruvian purple potato, a heart healthy, nutrient-filled potato (actually purple) developed with local farmers and marketed through Costco. Len's "tough love" teaching methods are both rigorous and nurturing. A former businessman in both Mexico and the Philippines and fluent in Spanish, he understands the worlds his students come from. So does Charro Cruz, a Filipino American, who helped design the Heritage Rocks t-shirt. He knows how "to get students hooked" on his enthusiastic passion for business by bringing in analogies and examples from their daily lives—relationships, pop culture, advertisements, and adversity. Len tells them that their lives, filled with unpredictability, are manageable—just like the world of business. "Know yourself and your vision," he says, "know business principles, know opportunities, know the nature of the world, and you will be in the 20% of the business world that succeeds and not the 80% that doesn't." Recently, two of his students were hired as managers at Macy's, chosen in a highly competitive process from among thousands of applicants.

Students blossom as a result of their participation in the Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) club, an energetic, entrepreneurial student group that

won regional and placed high in two national SIFE competitions. SIFE students have brought motivational speakers to campus, taught other college and local high school student clubs how to raise money, produced a business news program on local public access TV, raised funds to buy materials for Moonjar, an effective way of teaching the ethics of money management and business to seventh graders, and worked with local farmers, the USDA, and retail outlets to develop alternate uses of the land, such as growing the Peruvian purple potato. Such programs benefit not only the community but also students. "I was quiet when I came," a Latina student said, "but I had to give presentations in class, then at conferences, and now to business leaders. Heritage built my confidence."

Social work students are engaged in hands-on learning in local community social agencies, such as neighborhood after-school programs, residential treatment centers, and the mental health clinics and social service agencies of the local Farm Workers Clinic and Yakama Tribal government. The program's core principles include social and economic justice, populations at risk, and an ecological perspective, as well as such standard topics as social stratification, cultural diversity, and conflict resolution strategies. Social work instructor Miguel Juarez, who received his bachelor's degree from Heritage, engages his students in service-learning because he is aware that as a lifelong citizen of mostly Hispanic nearby Sunnyside, he has to be a "model for students" not only of appropriate social worker behaviors but also of commitment to his community. Social work chair Ray Bending, a Pima native, involves students in community activities addressing the needs of the elders in culturally sensitive ways. As an elder himself, Ray says, "I share my experience with students." He also encourages colleagues to "hear their [students'] voices."

Kirstin James, teaching introductory sociology, uses repeatable classroom rituals that guarantee that each student's voice is heard in every class. To begin, each student checks in and talks about an observation, idea, story, or feeling related to the course, followed by a small group exercise that experientially conveys a sociological principle, followed by the discussion of a related reading. Class concludes with in-class journal writing and a reflective closure in which the whole group synthesizes the learning from that class. On the night Peter observed her class, six students, their turn to "bring something about you, your values, your culture," presented moving stories of family, relationships, spiritual beliefs, parenting, and recovery from addiction. Most were accompanied by music, photos, and deep feelings.

Nursing instructor Georgette Kerr applies Paulo Freire to nursing education, eschewing lecturing for interactive, democratic, concept-driven, culturally inclusive, community-based teaching methods. The mostly female

students in the nursing program are active in local hospitals, the Farm Workers Clinic, and other community health intervention agencies. Sandra Wells, chair of the nursing program, explains, "We specifically teach students ways of being aware of cultural as well as other aspects of the social identity of patients without reducing patients to a race or ethnicity." In examining the intercultural dimensions of health, nursing students are encouraged to incorporate Native, Latino/Latina, and Asian traditional methods of healing into their clinical practice. Yoder (1997) says, "It is critical that nursing faculty examine their teaching approaches and develop effective teaching strategies for ethnically diverse students who are being educated to provide care for today's multicultural population" (p. 77). This advice is especially applicable for practitioners in a valley cursed by high rates of diabetes, obesity, and other diseases caused in part by the decline in salmon and other traditional foods.

Engaged, Intercultural Learning in the Sciences and Science Education

Responding to these health realities, mathematics instructor Tana Knudson has devised culturally informed teaching strategies using local examples to help her students feel more comfortable going to the board to solve problems and make presentations. Tana teaches both statistics and calculus to her mostly female, multicultural students by having them keep careful calculations of weight losses and gains during a specified time of attending to a diet and exercise program. In a 2004 statistics class, she gave students articles from a featured newspaper series on multiculturalism in the valley, including the human genome finding that genetically humans are 99.9% alike. That fact alone led to lively discussions in student groups assigned to analyze the many statistics in the article.

Biology, botany, and natural resource science students regularly work in the field. Aided by a NASA grant, they use satellite imagery to identify and address problems with ecological resources on Yakama reservation lands, in particular to preserve shrub steppe native flora in the highlands of Mt. Adams and Mt. Rainier. In summer 2004, led by Dean Jim Falco, 12 students (equally divided among Hispanics, Native Americans, and Euro-Americans) spent the summer in the field working with NASA equipment, the National Park Service, and Yakama Nation elders on this project. The team developed a new approach to characterize mixed vegetation to significantly improve the management of natural resources.

Chemistry professor Eric Leber wants his students to “pursue science-related questions in uncharted territory outside the confines/constraints of a lab book” in order to solve real-world problems with hands-on practical experiences using knowledge of chemistry. In the EcoVino program, working with vineyards and wineries in the Yakima Valley, he and his students have developed processes of turning the more than 50,000 tons of winery wastes from grape seeds, skins, and stems in eastern Washington into usable products such as animal feeds, antioxidants, soaps, fuels, paper, and bioplastics.

Part Blackfeet and Chata, Apanakhi Buckley, who teaches multicultural education and science teaching methods, has a huge commitment to her own as well as her students’ civic engagement. “I love seeing my students teaching out in the community. It is one way I feel effective.” As a pre-student teaching experience, her students design and teach an after-school curriculum for elementary age youngsters in Safe Haven, a neighborhood center in a tough gang area of Toppenish. When lack of funds threatened to close Safe Haven, Apanakhi both lobbied to keep it open and launched a new program at a school in Wapato, a nearby community whose population is 70% Latino, Native, and Filipino. Apanakhi’s students do not just plan tutoring exercises for English and math skills but also design full curricula for science and health units. As Apanakhi describes in “Tipi Technology,” her science education students learn how to teach principles of structural engineering, mathematics, and physics (convections, insulation, cohesion of water molecules) by working in groups to build a tipi over twice their height (Buckley, 2000). The task requires applying not only western science but also an understanding of traditional Native world views. “Multicultural science,” she says, “suggests that our understanding of the world may be illuminated if we are willing to admit more than one truth” (p. 17).

Heritage science and education students also work in partnership with the local Toppenish Tribal School, strengthening young peoples’ own understanding by teaching science concepts and providing role models for Indian youth. Jessica Sutterliet, a Winnebago Santee Dakota environmental science and botany student, visited the Tribal School to teach about native plants and their medicinal value, bringing examples from her field work for students to examine. In physics, Heritage students have taught principles of evaporation, condensation, and structural engineering by helping Tribal School students build a sweat lodge for healing rituals. As environmental science professor Pat Falco says in her Tennessee drawl, “we teach the science and bring in Yakama elders to teach the traditions.” Science faculty members teach students not just to “hear it,” but also to “see it, say it, do it, do it in groups.”

Summary Reflections on Effective Intercultural Teaching and Learning

What have we said here? A summary of the Heritage principles and best practices for intercultural education mentioned in this chapter would go something like this:

- Start where students are, and make connections with their lives, work, families, cultures, religious traditions, developmental concerns, and career aspirations.
- Use student stories to affirm their voices, honor their backgrounds, and connect their prior experiences and previous understandings with core course concepts and desired learning outcomes.
- Use interactive, active, collaborative, student-centered learning methods that encourage students to construct meaning themselves.
- Immerse students in hands-on, closely supervised, constructivist activities typical of the discipline, practiced and assessed over and over again ("time on task").
- Involve students in civic engagement, service-learning, and problem-based, even entrepreneurial inquiry, research projects in their own local communities and natural field sites.
- Build student self-confidence and motivation by providing opportunities for success, by giving prompt and thorough feedback on their work, and by showing genuine concern about their academic progress.
- Be challenging and supportive (tough love), hold realistically high expectations, and use study groups and other interventions, especially for at-risk students.
- Do not be afraid of emotions. Teach to both minds and hearts. Honor the affective, inner life (the heart) and rigorous critical thinking (the head), and understand the relationship among cognitive, affective, and even spiritual learning.
- Teach important new concepts at least two or three different ways, and provide frequent opportunities for meta-cognitive reflection, integration, and synthesis.

- Establish classroom rituals and guidelines, and develop active listening and other interpersonal skills to make classrooms safe for discussion, disagreement, and multiple perspectives, all of which lead to deeper intercultural understanding.
- Respect students both individually and culturally by seeing—truly seeing, hearing, and honoring—who they are holistically.

Except for perhaps the last two points, how is this list specifically about good *intercultural* practices? Are not these principles and practices the same as the seven principles of good practice (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) as updated by Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000), Zull (2002), and many other cognitive science and educational researchers on learning? Are not, then, the principles and best practices of effective intercultural education virtually the same as for *any* effective learning?

Consider, as one example, the “pedagogical suggestions” made by Warren (1998–99), a national leader in diversity education. In her article on “Class in the Classroom,” Warren cites several principles to enhance learning for students “regardless of their background” (p. 2): being explicit about classroom norms and expectations; knowing one’s students; varying learning strategies to include collaboration and group work; using examples from class (and we would add cultural) perspectives; and being a model in accepting differences. But are not Warren’s superb set of suggestions virtually identical to good educational practices in general?

The “virtually” qualifier is instructive, especially given the rapidly changing cultural faces of the future of American higher education. What is most distinctive—and instructive—about Heritage is its effectiveness with its multicultural students. We suggest three intersecting reasons, each having to do with context. First, Heritage’s institutional mission holds “cultural pluralism within our own and other communities” and the “honoring of each person’s human dignity and potential” as core values, not just in rhetoric but in daily practice (Heritage University, 2004, p. 3). Valuing and practicing intercultural learning pervades everyday activities, in class and out. Second, that practice happens not only in required program courses such as Multicultural Education, Managing Business Diversity, Cultural Diversity and Social Justice, and Comm. 305, but also, as we have seen, in most courses across the disciplines and professional programs at Heritage. Third, the student population itself is so thoroughly diverse, making the pervasive intercultural learning richer and more meaningful.

Because intercultural teaching and learning is extremely challenging as well as pervasive, Heritage faculty members are constantly learning from each

other. With so many at-risk, multicultural, often marginalized students at the center of institutional attention, the Center for Intercultural Learning and Teaching, which we facilitate, is synonymous with the institution itself. The entire university is, in fact, a "center" for intercultural learning and teaching, where the margins have moved to the center, a pattern likely to follow throughout American higher education. The examples of effective intercultural learning and teaching we have described are illuminating, for the diverse multicultural faces at Heritage University today increasingly will be the faces in other institutions tomorrow and for decades to come.

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