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## Understanding Others: How Cultural Awareness Affects Teaching Practices

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# Understanding Others: How Cultural Awareness Affects Teaching Practices

By: Jessica Leyder and faculty advisor Dr. Sarah Edwards Moore

## Research Question

How does cultural awareness affect my teaching practices?

## Research Methods

Data for this study consisted of journal entries and was collected using the developmental portfolio method.

## Limitations

- Limited amount of time to conduct the study
- Limited amount of time physically in the classroom

basket



Shown above is an example of a visual used in the classroom to support students of all language backgrounds.

## Findings

All of these excerpts are taken out of journals and show evidence of my teaching practices changing to fit my awareness of students' various cultural backgrounds.

### *Use of Visuals*

"...using a slideshow with pictures to aid the students who are English language learners."

"Something that I that would like to do more in the future is incorporating more pictures into my Google forms quizzes. I think it would help the students who struggle to read as well as English language learners."

### *Use of Gestures*

"Like yesterday, I used as many gestures and visuals as possible to help the students who are English language learners. One thing that I specifically added today was drawing fraction models or writing things like the mixed numbers on paper in math so that they are easier to see. I also have been continuing to use my fingers to show the page numbers that I need them to flip to in math class."

"One thing that I made sure to do during the reteaching was to have all the students answer as much as possible using gestures. For example, I would have them hold up the correct number of fingers or use thumbs up/thumbs down to answer a problem. I thought this would be a good way to involve all of the students and accommodate the English language learners in the class."

### *Use of Native Language*

"This is a concept that we talked about in Intro to Language Acquisition last semester. In the class, we discussed the importance of names to students' cultural identities. During my science lesson, I was forced to address students by the names for the first time. I tried my best to pronounce all of the students' names correctly, but I did mess up the pronunciation of one student's name."

"I used a lot of repetition visuals for my review of the planets to help the English language learners in the class. I also said some words in Spanish during the math lesson to help the English language learners because they all speak Spanish. I used some words for colors and numbers."

### *Understanding of Others' Culture*

"One example was on the day of the Halloween parade. That day, the teacher explained to me that some students are absent on the day of the parade, due to certain cultural or religious beliefs. She explained that it is important to know who will be absent and when, regarding cultural or religious observances. This is partially why it is essential to have a sense of your students' cultural and religious backgrounds."

"Something that related to my topic was briefly teaching them some things about the Lunar New Year."