Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain - Week 2 Reflection

26 responses

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Use page 37 to complete the analogy, think of the brain's physical structures as the brain's hardware and culture as ___ _____ ____ _____ __.

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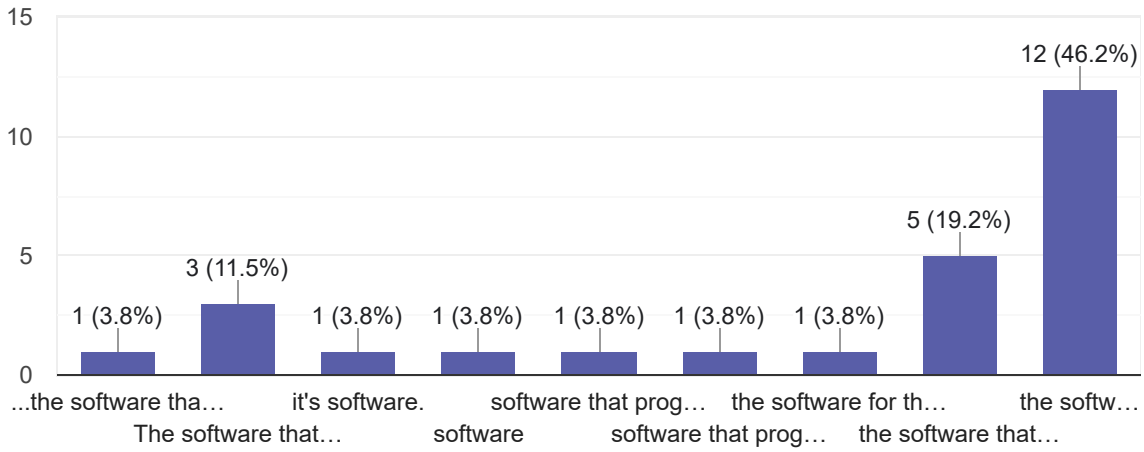
26 responses



What is the nickname for the first brain layer?

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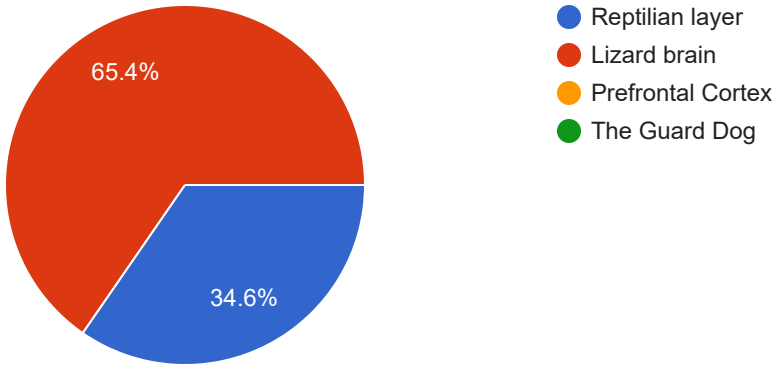

Which is NOT on of the Limbic region of the brain's primary functions?

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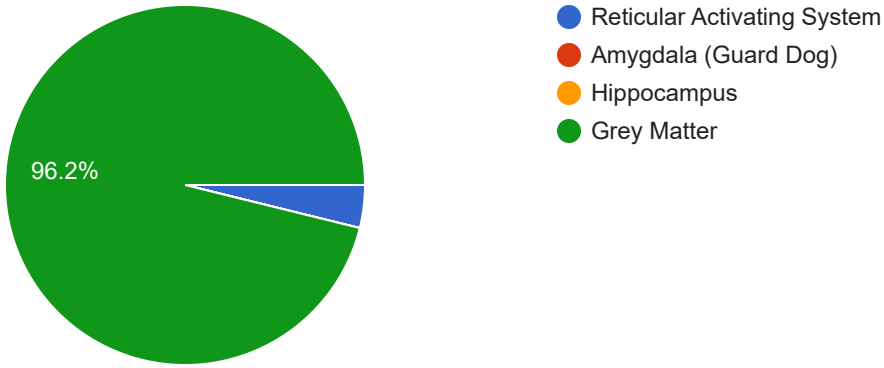

What is the "natural response" to an amygdala hijack?

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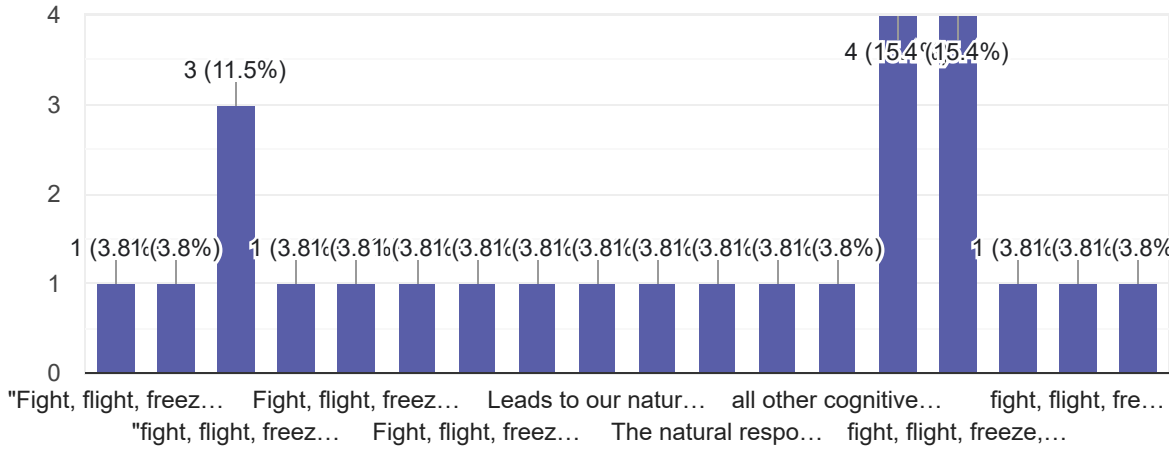
26 responses



Briefly explain what happens when a student experiences an amygdala hijack? What hormone is released and how the event impacts learning?

26 responses

When the amygdala sounds its alarm with cortisol, all other cognitive functions like learning, problem solving, and creative thinking stop. Cortisol is what is released and basically any type of learning stops when this happens.

They do one of the follow: fight, flight, freeze, appease". Cortisol is released and all other cognitive functions stop. This means that at this point, no learning with the student will take place. Their ability to learn, problem solve, and create just stops.

A student experiences this when th cortisol hormone is released, a situation might trigger this in the student. The amygdala hijacks control the student's ability to respond rationally to a threat. This then leads to the student reacting in an intense, emotional way that may be out of proportion to the situation. The student might lose their temper or explode. Without the ability to use their frontal lobes, the student is unable to think clearly and reacts without thinking.

When a student experiences an amygdala hijack all cognitive functions stops. The hormone cortisol is released and learning, problem solving, and creative thinking stops.

Cortisol hormone is released. Amygdala sounds an alarm. All cognitive functions are halted. Learning, problem solving or creative thinking stop.

The stress hormone, cortisol, is sent to the lizard brain by the amygdala. When this happens all cognitive processes and learning stop.

When a student experiences amygdala hijack the cortisol hormone is released. When this hormone is released a student is unable to process or use creative thinking, problem solving and learning. Its as if they are in survival mode.

Cortisol is released (a stress hormone), and all learning stops as the student enters "fight or flight" mode.

When a student experiences an "amygdala hijack" the hormone cortisol, is released causing all other cognitive functions such as learning, problem solving and creative thinking to stop.

Cortisol is released during an amygdala hijack, which means that all other cognitive functions such as learning, problem solving, or creative thinking stop.

Cortisol is released and it will make the students brain bypass all other functions, if a students brain is bypassing the other functions they will not have normal behavior or be able to focus & comprehend.

The first experience is the "fear system," which releases cortisol. It impacts cognitive functions, such as problem-solving or creativity.

When the amygdala sounds it's alarm with cortisol, all other cognitive functions such as learning, problem solving, or creative thinking stop.

Coritsol is released during an amygdala hijack. This bypasses the other structures of the brain. If this happens to a student, learning, problem solving and creative thinking come to a halt.

Cortisol is released and all learning, problem solving, or creative thinking stops.

Cortisol is released and all other cognitive functions such as learning, problem solving, or creative thinking stop.

The hormone released is cortisol.It impacts learning because learning cannot happen at this point. Learning has stopped. The student is reacting to a social or physical threat in less than a second due to this stressful situation.

When a student experiences an amygdala hijack all cognitive functions stop. The hormone cortisol is released. This event would impact a student's learning in a negative way because the student would no longer be engaged in learning. It would prevent a student from a rational response and lead to their natural "fight, flight, freeze or appease" response.

When a student experiences an amygdala hijack, the stress hormone cortisol is released. Critical thinking, problem solving and learning stops and the flight, flight, freeze or appease response kicks in making learning difficult.

When an amygdala hijack occurs, cortisol is released in the brain. This cortisol disrupts our executive functioning - our ability to learn, problem solve, make decision, and think rationally.

t produces cortisol, which is fight, fight, or freeze

The amygdala hijack operates as a guard dog for fear involving emotional processing. It reacts within less than a second of a social or physical threat. When a student experiences this kind of emotional hijack, their emotional response then, is to stop everything; causing the "fight, flight, freeze, or appease" response. The stress hormone that is released is cortisol which sends off alarms to the amygdala stopping all cognitive functions (learning, problem solving, creative thinking), hindering the students ability to learn.

Cortisol. All other cognitive functions such as learning, problem solving, or creative thinking stop.

Cortisol is released and this makes it impossible for a student to focus on learning. They are only focused on fight or flight responses to the perceived threat.

Cortisol is released and cognitive functions such as learning stop. The student is then in survival mode and no learning will happen.

Cortisol is released. Problem solving and creative thinking stop.

Finish this sentence: "Because of neuroplasticity...

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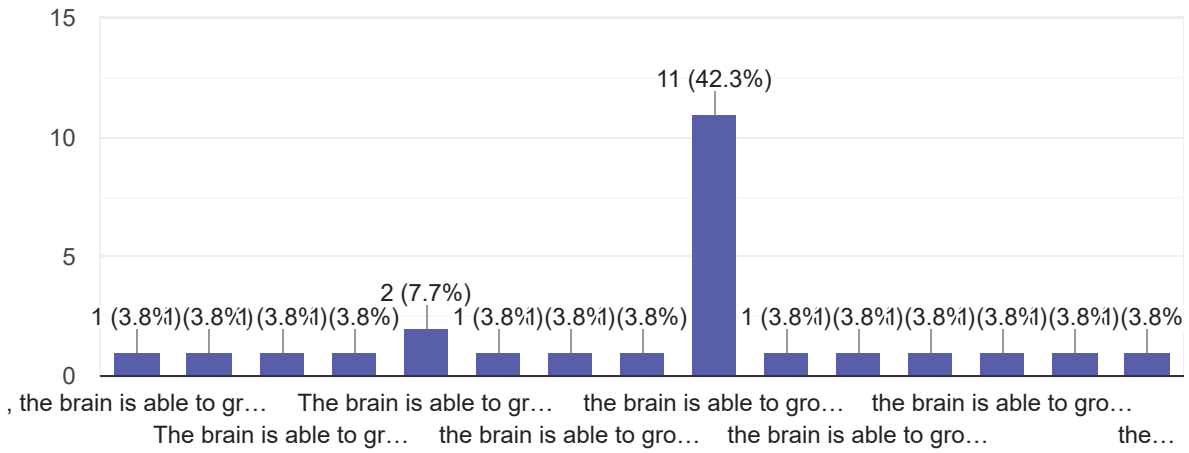
26 responses



Share two key learnings from Chapter 3 that will impact your approach to teaching next year.

25 responses

I think the seven culturally responsive brain rules really emphasized the importance of positive relationships within the classroom (this is with their teacher and each other). This focus on building relationships helps the student's brain focus on learning much more. This allows students to feel safe which is super important when learning and also allows them to pay more attention. When students have a positive relationship with each other and their teacher, they are more likely to not be distracted.

I had not heard of the "appease" response before when referring to the amygdala hijack. I will have to look more into this particular response.

As a culturally responsive teacher you have to familiarize yourself with common actions or conditions that make students feel unsafe, even if they cannot articulate this sense of threat. Your definition of what feels threatening or welcoming may be different from the students' definition. It is important to act according to students' definitions not your own.

Learning isn't a passive event but a dynamic action. It requires focused attention, active engagement and conscious processing by the learner.

All new information must be coupled with existing funds of knowledge in order to be learned.

A key learning that I will take into this year is that myelination makes it easier for the brain to do complex work,. because the myelin allows the chemical and electrical impulses to travel across the neuron faster. Repetition of a specific skill such as practicing freethrows, perfecting a challenging finger position on the violin, memorizing important content, or reciting a poem over and over to commit it to memory, triggers the release of myelin, and initiates the wrapping process. When we use new dendrites shortly after a learning episode our brain starves them. It assumes that if you didn't revisit the activity that grew the dendrites that information wasn't important to keep.

A second learning it is through the nervous system that people build the physical foundation for positive, receptive relationships. It is important to be able to build positive social relationships that will signal our students brains a sense of physical, psychological, and social safety so learning can take place.

The Brain's Safety-Threat System - Understanding how to build positive social relationships that signals the brain a sense of social & physical safety. So, that learning can be achieved. The brain's two prime directives; Stay safe & be happy. The brain protects a student's well-being many different aspects. Your definition of what feels threatening may be different from the students'. Act on the students'.

A huge takeaway from chapter three is the importance of social relationships. I have always valued building relationships with students but never fully understood the cognitive impacts of

relationships. When students are uncomfortable their brain produces cortisol, which in turn stops cognitive processes. Students cannot learn, create, or problem solve when the cortisol hormone is sent to the lizard brain. Pages 44-45 explains that our polyvagal nervouse system encourages social bonding. When this happens the nervous system produces oxytocin and allows students to feel safe and thus ready to learn. Stronger relationship building with students is at the top of my list for next school year!

The other big takeaway is that "the brain's two prime directives are to stay safe and be happy". I like to think of my classroom as a happy space. A place where students feel safe and can create without judgement. My hope for next year is to emphasize the freedom of creativity and "safety" and hope that this carries over into their other classes. Page 47 reinforced this with, "Your definition of what feels threatening or welcoming may be different from the student's definition". I want to be very intentional when creating a safe classroom environment by remembering that each student's culture is unique and different from my own.

*Under culturally responsive brain rules pg. 48, rule #2 "Positive relationships keep our safety-threat detection system in check" really stuck out to me. It explains the importance of creating that positive relationship and having a safe environment to keep a students mind available and ready to learn. Providing them with challenges to access and use higher order thinking in class will hopefully increase their learning and progress.
*Identify Your Cultural Frames of reference pg. 56, basically asks me to self evaluate or dig deep into my own upbringing and beliefs. Those aspects are what shaped me and having that understanding of my foundation makes me understand that they won't be every students foundation. I believe you have to meet students where they are and by fostering that positive relationship you can help them grow in a positive way and have life experience they may not feel they are able to reach.

I learned a lot about the brain's structure and functions and scientific responses to certain things in this chapter. Avoiding, approaching, and attaching was a big learning for me because it told me not only the brain structure that causes this response, but the purpose behind it too. It was also interesting that there is a newly discovered layer to the brain- the neocortex!

Being able to better relate to students and their learning. I have severe anxiety. I believe I must have low oxytocin and produce more amygdala. I often fall into the "avoiding" threat system as well as some of my students. So I can now better relate to that process. Also, building upon what they already know, existing knowledge. When trying to introduce new lessons, it is important to build upon what they already know. My students are at all different levels, so the lesson may have to be adapted differently for each student.

1. Our brains are hard wired for relationship building and collectivist cultural practices reinforce this. This seems in conflict with the American individualist tendencies, which are reinforced by our focusing on test scores. 2. Our brain's natural response to microaggressions results in a student feeling threatened and downgrades their ability to learn, making these small slights especially important to avoid even if they seem trivial to us.

When students are in fight or flight mode their brain is not functioning properly and that students need an inviting classroom in order for their brains to "attach" and know they are safe

in the environment, when students feel this, learning happens.

1. To continue providing a safe learning environment. 2. To continue the "brain growth" challenge to do more complex thinking and learning.

If I work to minimize threats to a students well being, it will maximize their learning. Since we are hardwired to connect to others, I must work to connect to every student.

I think it is very important to build an awareness to how our brains works. If we form strong relationships with our students, we can be aware and recognize triggers or things that may cause an amygdala hijack. Recognizing our students' strengths and weaknesses is very important. I also enjoyed learning about how we are hardwired to connect with others. Our relationships, being connected with others, friendships- it is part of human nature. I enjoyed reading how our nervous system is designed to recognize threats, but also things that make us feel good such as friendships with others.

1. Neural pathways are important because they help with problem solving. It drives new learning deeper into long-term learning. This concept of being able to learn no matter what and rewire the brain is important information for students to learn. Many come to use feeling inferior and that they will never learn. Teaching them about the brain and it's ability to grow and change is an important part of a growth mindset.

2. When we don't practice or use new dendrites shortly after a learning episode, our brain prunes them by starving them and then reabsorbing them. It is vital that students have time to practice what they have learned. This is something I want to spend more time on especially with vocabulary.

1. To build positive social relationships to students will get the signal to their brain that they have physical, psychological and social safety so that learning is possible.
2. To help students retain what they are learning, I have to determine what they already know and understand how they have it organized in their schema to then construct culturally based connections between what they know and their new content.

Two key learnings from Chp 3 that will impact my approach came from the Brain Rules section. They are 1) to continue and to improve on making all students feel safe and valued in the classroom and 2) improve on how I challenge the students to increase brain growth. I understand our classroom is run a bit differently that a Gen Ed classroom but I feel can apply those to make a positive impact. I feel if all students feel safe and valued it could help with some of the behaviors that occur. And if I can improve on how I challenge them they could have significant educational gains.

My two key learnings from Chapter 3 are from the Rules of the Brain section. The first, continuing to make students feel safe and valued in the classroom. Understanding what it means to be "safe" by the student's definition, not my own. The second, continued rapport building. Having positive relationships in a classroom can help students feel safe, which creates higher order thinking and learning.

1. Just as it's important for us to have knowledge of our brain structure and what it does, it can be equally important for students to have this same knowledge. Each part of our brain is important and provides something we need - no part is "bad."
2. "Positive relationships keep our safety-threat detection system in check." Students having multiple positive relationships is vital. We can still correct and discipline and maintain a positive relationship.

1. To be on the look out for the well being of my students and pay closer attention to when they are in Amygdala hijack. To help my students use strategies to shut down Amygdala hijack so they can return to learning.
2. To be aware of my own self and when stress or triggers are experienced and how to change the scenario outlined in the book.with steps SODA

One quote that stood out to me was on page 47, "It is not enough to have a classroom free of psychological and social threats. The brain needs to be part of a caring social community to maximize it's sense of well-being". This emphasizes the welcoming and safe environment that I intend to provide the students that I encounter.
Another quote that stood out to me on page 49, "The brain physically grows through challenges and stretch, expanding its ability to do more complex thinking and learning". Challenging the students I encounter in a healthy way to expand their critical thinking and learning skills is a teaching approach I intend on implementing.

Relationships are not just emotional; they have a physical component. They are the precursor to learning.

The brains two prime directives are to stay safe and happy. We cannot downplay students needs to feel safe and valued in the classroom. What a teacher may regard as an innocent gesture may be interpreted by the student as threatening.

Understanding that students' fight or flight responses to a classroom activity are activated by cultural differences is important. It causes a teacher to pause and dig into the triggers rather than reacting, while also allowing teachers to not take things personally. This is so important because our response to students in these situations, whether regulated or unregulated, affects the relationships we have with them and ultimately their ability to learn more in our classrooms.

Although I have had quite a bit of training in brain based teaching and how the nervous systema works with the amygdala and neural pathways, it is always good to be reminded of how the brain works and how our nature is to protect ourselves. On page 43 where it states that our brain will prune away new dendrites that are not revisited because it assumes the information is not important was eye opening. I guess I knew that but hadn't really thought about it explicitly.

Another learning is that we must couple new learning with existing knowledge. Activating students background knowledge will build the bridge for new learning to stick.

The safety threat detection system (pages 45-46) was interesting because it broke down the different systems with great examples that explain the stages students go through when in those phases.

Share a brief reflection on how this quote from page 53, "Before you can leverage diversity as an asset in the classroom, you must reflect on the challenges that can interfere with open acceptance of students who are different from you in background, race, class, language, or gender." applies to your work at HGS.

25 responses

I feel like this is super important as a teacher. If you don't have an open acceptance of all students (their background, race, class, language, gender, etc...) then honestly you shouldn't teach. It is important for me to believe in all of my students and accept them for who they are.

This is how I try to live and work in my classroom every day. We all come with our pre biases it's impossible not to. However, keeping them in check and remaining open to others is the only way to create a trusting community within your classroom. I treat every student in my classroom as if they are my own child and reflect on things I say and do to see how they may have impacted a student.

Don't assume things about students and always put yourself in their shoes. Think before reacting.

We have to develop the right mindset through self-reflection Our goal should be for all of our students to feel cared for, seen, and heard in our classrooms. Self- reflection is needed after each lesson and unit.

At times it is a challenge to come out of your comfort zone. In preparation of being mindful & accepting of others, you need to be aware of your own feelings present.

This can definitely be a challenge because we sometimes as teachers feel that by a certain age or grade level students should know or be aware of certain things. We must understand at all times that we should not assume what a child may or may not have experienced. We must also not judge if a students family dynamic does not agree with our way of living or beliefs. I think it is extremely important for all students to see representation of themselves at all levels. They need to see that hard work pays off and they are capable of amazing things if they strive for the best. Our CRT committee is great and allows students that opportunity to see and experience different cultures.

This quote applies to my work as as teacher at HGS because of how applicable it is. I must reflect on my own bias (intentional and unintentional) and unpack those to be able to be culturally responsive to my students and to others. Becoming aware is the biggest step!

Although students may have been born, raised, look different and act different it is ok for them to have different views, opinions, and beliefs. Everyone is unique and must be treated that way. Some of my lessons may include holidays that are specific to a certain culture and religion. I need to be conscious of different backgrounds and cultures to include those as well. Even

asking children to share their views is a good way to show my other students that "one way" is not the only way.

Supporting students from diverse backgrounds cannot take place to the fullest extent until we are able to empathize with their backgrounds and experiences and consider how our personal experiences/upbringings differ and may affect the way that we view the world and approach different situations. This means self-reflecting as a first step to consider what we may need to see or do differently in order to alter our classroom practices in a way that is culturally responsive.

I think at HGS most teachers are "culturally responsive." I do not feel that any of our teachers treat kids differently bc of their class or race or gender. There are things that I, as a teacher, may not believe in personally but I do not treat students differently because of that.

Having the military combined with my three young adults has allowed me to understand the challenges of acceptance and tolerance of others.

In order to reach all students, you have to walk a mile in their shoes. I try to be open minded in my classroom and understand that my way is not the only way.

I think this quote is very important for me as I see every student at HGS each week in my classroom. I plan to go into this school year with a very open acceptance but also aware of the challenges ahead.

I need to reflect on what I bring to the classroom and how that is different than the students. I serve. Doing this will help me identify my implicit biases. By doing this I will hopefully enter look at situations through the eyes of my students.

It is hard. We - students and staff need to recognize, celebrate, and accept differences while also not allowing them control or affect in a negative way the learning environment. Relationships are key!

I need to understand my own cultural diversity so that I will know how this shapes my classroom expectations. This also helps me know when a student is just responding differently (due to their different culture), not being defiant or rude.

The challenges that can interfere with open acceptance would be understanding the mindset of those that are different from myself. An example would be a family with generational poverty places emphasis on materialistic things than trying to better their situation. Unfortunately I feel this was the case with a student last year from a lower income household. He would tell us he owned expensive shoes or toys but they were in storage and every time he had a little bit of money he wanted to appear cool and buy what he thought others would approve of. No matter how many conversations I had about trying his best at school so he could succeed later in life he only wanted to focus on what he owned not that an education could help him achieve more.

Embracing and accepting diversity in a classroom can remove barriers to learning. An inclusive classroom that feels safe, where students feel valued and respected creates an environment where students can thrive.

We cannot keep our biases within the unconscious level. We have to dig deep and work to bring them up and out so we can address them head on. It's important to be self-reflective and to reflect often. If we try to leverage diversity without doing this, it will backfire and the environment will not feel safe because of our unconscious biases.

you have to identify biases that impeded your ability to teach to all of your students with the same equity

Before you can use anything as an asset, it is often viewed as a challenge. And with most challenges, they require examination and intentionality. Being intentional about examining each students background to provide them with the education they deserve exceeds any challenge. Open acceptance of students will have challenges, but none that will hinder the education and positive atmosphere that I intend to incorporate.

I must think about the way that my culture inhibits me from understanding and connecting with my students and vice-versa. I have to try to see things from their point of view and struggles they face. It is important to take time to get to know students and their families so you have a true sense of their culture- not just a guess based off of skin color or ethnicity.

I need to understand the differences between myself and the backgrounds of my students at HGS in order to celebrate diversity in my classroom. This will affect how far we can go as a class.

Although it has been many years since I have taught at HGS, I believe this applies to any school with a diverse clientele. I do believe that as an educator we must reflect on and recognize challenges that we may need to personally address before we can effectively reach students in our classroom. If we do not, there could be major roadblocks that could hinder our mission as educators.

Being able to accept students for who they are should come natural. Everyone has a background, race, class, language, or gender and being able to embrace those things is what makes my classroom whole.

Which of the following steps of unpacking your implicit bias do you connect with best and why?
(1) - Begin with an Intention
(2) - Self- Examination
(3) - Identify Your cultural Frame of Reference

26 responses

Begin with intention connects with me most because when you commit to the process of something with intention you will be more likely to improve.

(1) - Begin with an intention: if you are already invested and committed to a culturally inclusive classroom then you have the intention to be fair and allow each student to grow. This is being intentional in your cultural responses to students and situations.

Begin with a intention because everything I do in my classroom I do with the intent and put thought into especially when it comes to helping my students grow and learn.

I connect with self examination because I feel I reflect a lot and try to make my lessons where all kids are engaged.

(2) I have experienced widening my cultural opening. I have confronted discomfort by not being able to speak the language & by experiencing different practices. I have learned to adapt to different cultural views.

Right now I think I connect best with 1, begin with intention. Reading this book and learning more about culture and the brain is helping me start this school year with intention. I am setting small goals to becoming a culturally responsive teacher as the book has stated this is something that does not happen overnight. it is mindset and a journey, not just a set of strategies. As I learn more through this book I feel like I will be able to better connect with option two and three.

(2) - This allows teachers to better understand how to respond to students of different cultures. What works for one student may not work for the other. I have learned that with my own personal children. My approach or how I discipline for one may not be needed for the other. This is the same for students in your classroom.

I connect the best with #3, because I this book has helped me to unpack it some! I truly did not have a deep knowledge of what culture was and how it impacts me as a person and teacher until teaching and reading this book.

2.) Self-examination. I can relate best with this step as I try listen to my students in order to respond positively and constructively to the students who may be culturally different in some way.

I think identifying your cultural frame of reference is especially important and goes hand-in-hand with self examination. I don't think many of us realize how many parts of our day to day life and everyday practices are steeped in cultural norms that we don't realize we have. For example, many Southerners have heard the phrase "your mama raised you right" and we have automatic assumptions about what that might mean in reference to our manners, habits, food choices, style of dress, etc. We may just think of these things as ways of life, but to outsiders who don't share the same practices, there is a judgment that they weren't "raised right." Simply admitting that not everyone shares the same norms as us is an important first step.

Self Examination; remembering that the way I was raised is different from how different students were raised.

Self-Examination allows me to stay "teachable" and maintain proper inward social attitudes towards others.

1. I have always try to have good and pure intentions when it comes to how I treat others. This is the launching pad for successful connections to others of diverse backgrounds.

I really connected with the self examination step. The difference between "making the familiar strange" and "making the strange familiar" is something I haven't really thought about before. I think that by self examining where I am, and pushing myself out of my comfort zone, I will be more likely to understand the cultural norms of my students.

I connect with identifying my cultural frame of reference. I feel if I understand mine, then I can better understand my triggers in order to be more culturally responsive.

Begin with an Intention - If I understand the question correctly I chose number one due to the fact that intentionality has always been a goal in my classroom. Being aware and being intentional about student's various backgrounds and challenges.

I best connect with self examination because I think before you can understand where a student is coming from you have to first understand where you come from.Often it is molded so deeply in us it is just who we are. But, we have to understand others have different cultures and we have to respect that and know just because a student acts different that we are used to does not mean they are being defiant.

I connect with Self Examination and a little of Identify Your Cultural Frame of Reference best. I have self examined myself and understood my cultural differences since I was a child. As a Navy brat I moved around very often and my friends and neighborhoods were diverse. So that made me aware at a young age that different cultures ate foods differently, behaved differently, were disciplined differently, etc than what my family did. As a child/teen I had to understand these differences and adapt so I could make friends. Even as an adult and being a military spouse and moving so much I made friends of different backgrounds and races and we often talked of our differences in our childhood, the foods we ate, etc.

Being with an Intention. I connect with this best because of the classroom setting. I have to be prepared to tackle any challenge at any point in time.

#2. I am a reflective person but nature (and because of my profession) so this is probably the step I stay in/come back to the most.

(1) Begin with an intention

I loved "self-examination: making the familiar strange". This encouraged me to stay openminded on communication with my students as what has shaped my "normal", may be strange to the students of different culture. Keeping what I consider familiar, strange, will encourage open communication with students.

I connect most with self-examination. From participating in this book study multiple times I have really grown my ability to think about my expectations based on my cultural point of view and adjust or broaden them to accept others.

I think I have been in the self-examination step this past school year, as I had a very challenging group of students this past year in terms of the backgrounds they brought to the classroom. They would do things that puzzled me and I had to begin looking into the reasons behind their responses. I am moving towards Step 3 in this new year, or I hope to. Changing school systems may cause it to take me a little bit longer, as I have an entirely new community of learners to get accustomed to.

I think #3 Identify your cultural frame of reference because it includes mapping your cultural reference points. The author gives lots of questions to answer that I think will allow me to really dig into my background and discover my implicit biases.

1- Trying to understand other people's thinking is a challenge and being able to prepare myself to improve is why I am at step 1.

What is your biggest take away from the James and the pencil sharpener example from page 58?

26 responses

That out cultures affect the way we say, do and even hear things.

That indirect directives are a feature of White Middle Class culture. I have never thought about this before.

That teachers need to learn to expand their interpretations of student behavior to include different cultural displays of learning and social interactions.

There was a disconnect in the communication style that the teacher was trying to use with James. This could easily happen in any of our classrooms today if we don't truly understand our students.

James may have given more options at home when it comes to decision making. At school, that specific command was not up for debate from the teacher's perspective. For some students, what we may consider being disrespectful, may not be looked upon as that in the students' home.

My biggest take away is that I need to understand a student's culture before automatically assuming they are being defiant. The way I think and my expectations are totally different than that of some students.

He is definitely a literal thinker. LOL! What is considered disrespect to his teacher may be accepted at his home. Some students have conversations with adults as if they were adults themselves. No disrespect may have been intended but thats how he may be allowed to do outside of the classroom. This is a teachable moment for the teacher to explain or rephrase the questions and help him understand why sharpening his pencil at that time was the wrong choice.

My biggest takeaway is how something so small, can have such a deeper cause/effect.

Not all students understand and comprehend the same way. Some of my students are very literal and do not understand figurative language, therefore they struggle when these are used in everyday language.

The James scenario brings to light how many phrases some of us (myself included) use that are meant to be taken rhetorically but have the potential to be taken literally by someone with different cultural norms. This means that the everyday phrases we use may need reconsideration if we expect to establish trust and respect with students.

To think about how we say things as a teacher to make sure that it is not interpreted in the

wrong way for students.

This incident, for James, would have been avoided with the procedures in place for when to sharpen a pencil.

We have to be open to another's viewpoint and give students second chances to correct a behavior.

The cross-cultural miscommunication is the biggest takeaway for me. I do see how indirect directives can be used and misunderstood by others. This is a great eye opener for me!

I need to be clear in all communication and take the “guessing game” out of it for students.

All cultures do not communicate in the same manner. What is considered the norm in one cultural is seen as disrespectful in others. Being mindful of this is huge in connecting with students as well as avoiding triggers.

The teacher should learn that from now on for this student she gives him direct instruction on what she wants rather than asking in a question form for him to interpret as her asking him what he wants to do.

My biggest take away is that the teacher was wrong. I have caught myself giving indirect directives before and after the student answered my question instead of doing what I wanted him I would respond, " sorry that wasn't a question, take your seat." Even if she believed the student was in the wrong for answering her instead of doing what she had thought she told him she should have also caught she was in the wrong also.

You can't assume that every student understands or is receptive to the same directive. Cultural plays a very important role in how a student will react to every situation.

We need to pause and try to understand behavior before correcting, disciplining, teaching a different way, etc. Our own emotions can also be used as information for us and can signal a reflection point we need to dig deeper into.

How we frame a request can make all the difference in the response of a student

Being direct on instructions and keeping my emotions/opinions separate from what the professional response should be, will in the long run, build report with the student.

I am part of the culture who grew up responding to indirect directives. This teacher could have been me earlier on in my career. It really does cause me to stop and think about things I may see as disrespectful, that are not meant that way by a student.

Ways of communicating in different cultures can cause problems between teachers and their students. We need to consider these things when disciplining students. This problem could have been avoided if the teacher had conferenced with the student and asked probing

questions, rather than quickly involving the office. Layers of progressive discipline prevent teachers from making some of these mistakes because they require them to slow down and consider the student and talk to the parent before passing off a problem to administration.

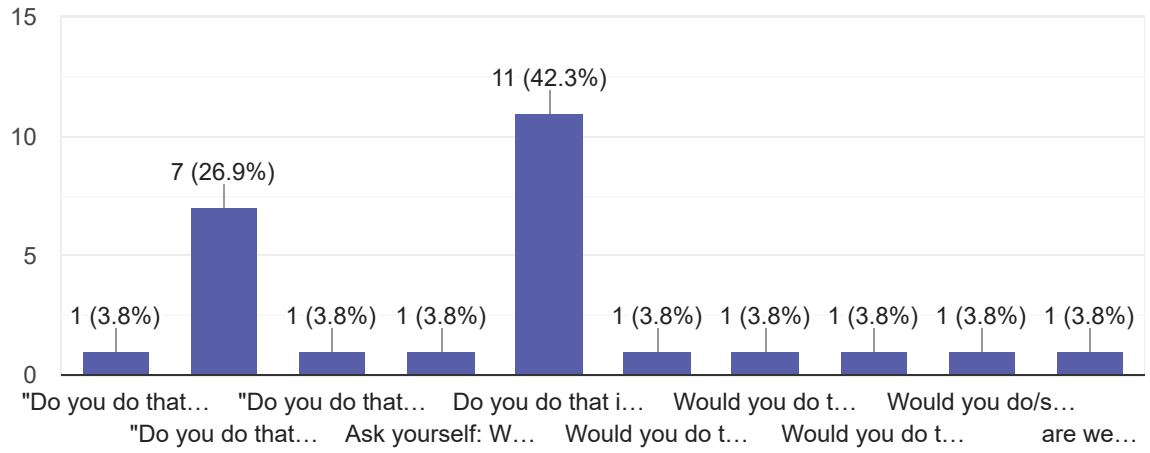
I have had interactions like this through the years and have had to learn, through those experiences, to evaluate my communication style. The teacher asked and he answered. She did not give him a directive. A visit to the office could have been avoided in this case by simply rephrasing her request.

Don't always assume a student is trying to be disrespectful. Take time to understand their why.

What is the question the author suggest using to check if a student behavior is acceptable in their own culture?

Copy

26 responses



Dr. Lassiter's favorite paragraph in the book is on page 61. How could you proactively teach "Situational appropriateness" to the students you teach?

26 responses

When a student's behavior has impacted the learning or safety of other students in a negative way, it is important to talk to the student about their actions to see if this is a behavior that has been learned at home (in his/her culture). I can see the above question (Do you do that in front of your grandmother) being a good way to start this conversation to determine if this is something that is appropriate at home and then to teach the student that in the situation of being at school it is not.

You could provide students with stories and scenarios in morning meeting and discuss how they would respond. You could allow for cultural exploration in your classroom and find ways for students to learn about other cultures. You could also walk students through situations that did not go as planned and see where their head was at and how it impacted the choices they made. I called this "make it make sense" in my classroom.

Spend time viewing the replay in your mind.

Make a list of assumptions, reactions of the behavior as the scenario replays

Try on alternative explanations.

Build cross cultural background knowledge

Team building exercises/scenarios and by using books/read alouds or short videos for examples.

You could do that when you teach the HGS PBIS Matrix at the beginning of the school year. You could discuss with the students that just like at home you have expectations there and you also have expectations that we go by at school that are listed here on the PBIS Matrix. You could also use it when dealing with correcting certain student behaviors.

Engaging students in a discussion on "rules" that apply in a classroom setting & establishing those from the beginning of the school year.

I think having conversations with students and being open about "situational appropriateness" will help 0students understand this concept better.

I think this is a foundation that should be done at the beginning of the school year when setting classroom expectations. Having a a safe and respectful classroom environment is most important. Students need to feel they can voice their opinions/feelings and not be judged. This can also lead to teachable classroom discussions and ideas on how to better handle a situations and coming up with solutions as a class.

Maybe create scenarios and ask students what are appropriate to do at different locations and have them explain why.

My non-verbal students show their communitive intent often through their behaviors. Observation of the behaviors may take several incidences to "discover" what they are trying to communicate to others. Patience with their behaviors are necessary.

Teaching students situational appropriateness would need to be an ongoing process, but can begin by teaching them to "do the right thing at the right time." Teaching them to ask themselves before they act, is this the right thing to do at this particular time? For example, while comforting a friend who is upset is the right thing to do, getting up in the middle of a lesson to do so would not be the right time to do it. Teaching them to consider this question before acting is a good first step, followed by helping them to understand what the "right thing" is in different situations, which takes more time and attention to do over the course of a child's upbringing.

I think you teach it at the beginning of the year by going over the rules and expectations & setting the stage for your classroom. "In this classroom we...." or "at HGS we...." to let students know what is expected of them at school, no matter what they do at home.

Apply the Mindful Reflections protocols that are listed on pages 61 and 62. Unpack the situation to the initial actions of the matter.

Give several examples and scenarios of behaviors in different environments and explain the cause and effects of the behaviors within each environment.

We must help students understand how to react and interact in ways that are still appropriate in the situation. I also gained a lot from this paragraph and will remember the question that the author suggested to use.

Teach expectations up front by teaching the PBIS matrix and specific expectations within the classroom.

Explain to students that their behavior may not be "bad" but it is not appropriate for the situation or environment. Explain and give details when possible for best teaching moment.

After talking with them to understand if that is allowed behavior in their home to help the teacher understand what would be an appropriate or inappropriate response. Then maybe the teacher could suggest other appropriate responses in case the situation occurs again. The teacher can also discuss the situation with other culturally responsive teachers to get their input.

I could proactively teach "situational appropriateness" to the students from day one in class. Explain day one of school about there is a time and place to act certain ways. Give them an example that it is ok while at a sporting event your team scores or when something great happens at home to yell and cheer but during class its not ok to yell and cheer when you are

doing well on a test. And have the students give ideas on what an alternative behavior would be appropriate. That would help them understand what behaviors are acceptable in school and would help me as a teacher understand what their culture feels is appropriate.

In our classroom, we need ROUTINE. We need to provide clear expectations, teach and practice coping skills the students can use in and outside of school, praise good behavior, be consistent, and acknowledge feelings.

When teaching PBIS matrix and behavior expectations, have them identify behaviors that are okay at their home. I do this by giving examples of things I can think of that may be okay in some homes but would be inappropriate for school (ex. cussing, jumping off furniture) and asking if these are things they are allowed to do at home. I then explain that some behaviors are okay in some situations/places, but not others. I often give an example of this from my own home. I have them come up with additional examples that they can think of on their own. I even have them identify behaviors that would be okay in one part of the school, but not the other. You could also have them identify parts of the PBIS matrix that are different for them at home. I've found that group discussion also helps with this as kids begin to understand in context what another student is saying (particular if from a similar culture and/or family structure).

ill use an example of lunchroom behavior. I always tell the students to think of the kind of behavior that is expected when they are at a nice restaurant. Is running around the restaurant ok ? Is yelling across the table ok? Is playing with or throwing food ok? The answer should be NO it would be embarrassing to my family.

Teaching the students situational appropriateness is helpful for them to incorporate at a young age to prevent conflicts later in life. Proactively teaching situational appropriateness by teaching the student to examine their emotions, understanding, and how to communicate them to the appropriate individual would be the first step I would take in teaching situational appropriateness.

Have strong procedures. Teach well and review frequently. Students know what is expected of them at a given time. My teaching style includes call and response. I have to teach that this is my expectation as some students have been taught not to "call out". Other times, I will say that I want to give think time and want answers written down. I model and teach these procedures. PBIS helps to review expected behaviors for other school settings. Social story read alouds and discussions. I read "What if Everybody Did That?" at the beginning of the school year when I teach procedures. It focuses on remembering that at school you are part of a collective whole and behaviors that may be minor if you were the only one doing them (ex. talking out of turn) are a big deal if "everybody" were to do them.

I have conversations with my students at the beginning of the year using silly examples to show them that some things are appropriate in one situation and not another. For example, I talk to students about how it's totally acceptable to wear your bathing suit at the beach, but if you walk into a movie theater dressed that way you would get strange looks. They giggle, and then I talk to them about how some things they do at home might be acceptable at home, but in school we have other ways of doing things. I explain that I'm going to ask them to do things

in a way that helps us to all learn the most we can, and that might be different than what they do at home. This helps us have a shared understanding of the reason for rules before students bump up against boundaries.

You could spend time role playing with students and have them discuss different scenarios. You could then have class discussions on how could you have handled/reacted differently as a teacher or a student.

Have students model situations with appropriate responses.

How does "Calm Corners align to the research on "Practicing Emotional Self-Management" on page 66 - 67?

26 responses

The camling corner enables students to be aware of their own feelings so that they are aware of how to manage emotions that are beginning to take over. It is a safe place for them to go and lets them know that it is okay to have those moments. This also enables other students to continue learning and not have those emotions spread across the class.

I haven't been trained on them, but I believe the calm corners allow for a cool down period and self reflection of your emotions. This aligns with the book because it encourages self management of through 3 steps: 1. Identify what sets your off 2. Label your feelings when they come up. 3. Create an "early warning system". The first two would be the effective ones in the calm corner.

The Calming Corner chair is to provide any student with a space in which they'll feel safe recognizing and regulating their emotions in a healthy way. It is a way to prevent multiple students from spreading negative/toxic emotions by helping to control the environment.

The calming corners help the students recognize what is about to set them off and helps them stay calm where the SODA strategy can help the teacher stay under control and avoid responding negatively.

Using the "Calm Corners" involves the students being aware of their feelings & acknowledging them. The "Calm Corners " gives students the opportunity to manage ones self & adjustments can be made being returning to their desk.

Pages 66-67 reinforce the importance of practicing emotional self-management. Like the calm corner, it states how important it is to calm the amygdala. The SODA strategy is very similar to the calm corner and helps students from responding negatively.

Calming Corner allows students time to process their behavior and have a period of calming down to assess their behavior and think through what happened.

Calming corners align to practicing emotional self management by providing a safe space and tools to give students a place to self regulate their emotions.

Calming corners aid in making everyone reactive vs. responsive. It helps students identify their feelings allowing the body time to step back and regroup.

Calm corners align to the research on practicing emotional self-management because they give a child the opportunity to separate themselves instead of spreading negativity and toxicity in the classroom, and also to help themselves to gain control of their emotions during an amygdala hijack.

It gives the student time to self regulate and get back in the right state of mind.

Practical communication tools with a caring adult are missing regarding the "calming corner."

It teaches self regulation of emotions.

I love how we implement calm corners at HGS and it directly aligns to this research in this book. Practicing emotional self-management is key to helping students learn how to cope with their emotions.

Calm Corners allows students to reflect and figure out why they are upset and label it so that they can the deal with it.

Calm Corners help students identify that there is a problem and then allows them space and safety to work through those feelings and emotions with the hope of diffusing or lessening the behavior or situation.

They are both about students managing their own emotional state before things get out of hand.

When a student goes to the calming corner we want them to take the time too cool down but to reflect on the same things as the "Practicing Emotional Self Management." To think about what set them off and how to respond, to understand that they were angry or overwhelmed and to hopefully know what caused that to happen so they (and their teachers) can help prevent it from happening again.

Calm corners give students time to sit back and reflect on the situation. They can stop, observe, detach and awaken.

"Emotions are contagious." That means any one of the people within the school/classroom environment can affect the others. Because Calm Corners are for everyone, it allows everyone the chance to regulate their emotions, which also can impact the environment in a positive way. Calm Corners really hits on they components listed within the section - through using them we are helping ourselves and our students identify and label emotions, identify what sets us off (triggers), and identify how we know and when we need to use the Calm Corner ("early warning system"). Through this, Calm Corners helps everyone adjust their emotional state.

It provides a place to allow a student to momentarily break from the situation and either read quietly or journal their feelings . I really like the idea of the them identifying their feelings and what's happening to make them upset. This can also be used to discuss with them later and help 1. identify what happened. 2. How they reacted. 3. What are some strategies to avoid it in the future. 4. what is there role in changing what happened?

Calm corners gives the student the opportunity to practice emotional self-management by allowing the student to have alone time to examine their emotions and how to communicate

them to the appropriate person.

The Calm Corner gives students a space to Detach and Awaken as part of the SODA Strategy.

The emotional self-management steps described in these pages require students to take a time out and reflect on their responses. The calm corner is a place they can do that. Teachers can also encourage calming strategies that help students detach as well as activities such as journaling that help them identify emotions.

I am thinking that "Calm Corners" is a place where students are allowed to remove themselves from a situation when they recognize the need to calm themselves like the SODA strategy in the reading. This allows for students to self regulate and allow them the opportunity gain control of themselves and their emotions before it is to the point of no return.

The purpose of the calm corner is for students to learn to self regulate their emotions. The steps in practicing the emotional self management are pretty much the same where the student stops to ask to go to the calm corner, then goes there (observes), then uses a fidget or activity (Detach), and then comes back to the class.

What is one point that the author made in the book that you DO NOT agree with?

22 responses

None at this time.

The part about the brain layers being millions of years old (p. 37 and 40). I don't believe that anything is millions of years old. These statements are rooted in the theory of evolution.

I don't totally disagree with this but I think that when it says "culturally responsive teachers have to understand their own cultural reference points to be effective" it should say more effective. In my opinion, you can be an effective teacher without being completely aware and understanding of your own cultural references. But accepting feedback and learning from it is how you grow and are effective. You are showing your willingness to admit your faults and learn as well.

While none of us are perfect at times I feel that this book at time perceives us as negative people that have automatic implicit biases towards students of other races, gender, classes and language. I think we do have to self reflect and change some things but some things we do are good and successful. As educators and principals/administrators we should presume confidence in our staff.

"Engaging in reflection helps CRT to recognize the beliefs, behaviors & practices that get in the way of their ability to respond constructively & positively to students."
I believe there are instances in which our beliefs, behaviors & practices do not get in the way of handling situations in an empathetic manner.

I did not disagree with anything in chapters 3 and 4.

I don't really disagree with any one point from the chapters read. I think its just important to understand cultural backgrounds and how responses may or may not be acceptable for certain situations.

None that I can think of for these chapters.

Chapter 4 was quite a great read. I don't really have a disagreement with the information presented.

None

There wasn't very much in chapters 3 & 4 that I have strong feelings against.

N/A

I agreed with everything in these 2 chapters and learned a lot!

Too often we only focus on doing something to culturally diverse students without changing ourselves. I think we see when students are different that ourselves and try to understand the student so we can better reach them and form that bond with them as their teacher.Because, without changing ourselves it is hard, if not impossible, to reach that student.

n/a

Similar to my Week 1 reflection, there's nothing in these chapters I don't agree with. Reflecting early on in my career though, it would have been the deficit thinking paradigm that I would have been challenged on.

I honestly could not find anything that I disagreed with

I do not agree that a majority of teachers have "deficit thinking" as their default programming. (p.59) A lack of understanding of the concepts presented in this book (culture, relationships, etc.) or knowing what to do to fix it may lead to underperformance of certain groups, but I do not agree that that is because most teachers (white, middle-class is what is implied here) really think certain groups have a deficit and cannot achieve.

Sometimes I get the impression that the author is so focused on understanding student culture as a reason for "inappropriate" behavior that the idea of a shared unique culture at school becomes secondary. Teachers need to be able to function in the culture they create in their classrooms, and if this idea is taken too far the classroom environment will be unsustainable for the teacher to run, based on being too far from his or her own cultural frame of reference. It's also important for students to learn that they themselves will encounter supervisors (which teachers represent) that have different cultures than their own and they need to adapt to a variety of situations rather than being offended. This goes both ways. I am definitely interested in learning more about this, without sacrificing the belief that students still need to be adaptable to those in authority.

I really do not like this question!! I am not sure if this qualifies or not but in this section I DO NOT agree with the brain development time frame of millions of years old. As a Christian, I believe in a Creator who designed us to be these wonderfully, complex beings.

Unknown

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