

Episode 10 Transcript

00:00:17,180 --> 00:02:22,399 [Speaker 0]

As a reminder, any time another work is referenced, you will hear a ding. A timestamp document with references will be available in the show notes. In addition, any time there's a direct quote, you will soft music playing underneath it. This will help you as y- listeners determine the difference between paraphrased information and quotes directly from other sources. This podcast is a unique opportunity to listen to the voices of educators. In doing so, they allowed their voices and opinions to be exposed while also allowing me to critically analyze their responses so that they relate to each episode's themes. This was all member-checked or checked for validity by the participants before publication. Welcome back to Education Isn't a To-Do List. I'm your host, Hannah Jimenez. In this episode, we are going to continue analyzing the responses of my recent interviews in order to see the different patterns that emerge across educational contexts. The next theme that I want to explore is the importance of culturally sustaining pedagogy in our North Carolina public schools. It is one thing to stand on the outside of a school and make assumptions about what this means and its importance to students, but it's another to hear directly from the educators about how it impacts students and themselves directly. As a reminder, the following are our interview participants. Ms. Kimberly Jones has been an educator for 19 years, and she was named North Carolina Teacher of the Year in 2023. She predominantly teaches high school English in central North Carolina. Dr. Aaron Gabriel has been in education for 29 years and is currently serving as a superintendent in central North Carolina. Ms. Jill Erwin-Hardel has been an educator for 28 years and is currently serving as an IB coordinator in central North Carolina. Mr. Silas Burk has been an educator for 13 years and currently teaches middle school English in central North Carolina. Lastly is Ms. Paula Januzzi-Godfrey who has been in education for 41 years and currently serves as an elementary school librarian in central North Carolina.

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As we listen, try to leave any assumptions or biases that you have about the nature of such an educational initiative behind and consider specifically what each interviewee mentions. Let's start by hearing from Ms. Paula Januzzi and her thoughts around culturally sustaining pedagogy.

00:02:39,199 --> 00:02:52,779 [Speaker 1]

[clears throat] As a classroom teacher,

00:02:52,779 --> 00:03:04,999 [Speaker 1]

uh, I believe that was one of my strengths, and, um, and it was because, um, way before they started talking about morning meetings and

00:03:04,999 --> 00:03:14,499 [Speaker 1]

all the different things that we talk about now about climate in, uh, schools, um, I always felt that it was important to have...

00:03:14,499 --> 00:03:20,619 [Speaker 1]

Honestly, in setting up a classroom, uh, to

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have a space, a physical space, that was for community building and community gathering as opposed to everybody always being at their seat, at their table, at their desk. Um, so I always,

00:03:37,859 --> 00:04:05,639 [Speaker 1]

always had certainly a carpet area. I, I actually always had a sofa and chairs, um, so that we could gather together and do a lot of reading together and discussing together and just sharing, um, just sharing personal things and/or our thoughts about what we were reading. And I intentionally would choose books that

00:04:05,639 --> 00:04:47,239 [Speaker 1]

encouraged that discussion about how we were feeling or about how a character was being treated or how a character was feeling. Um, as you get to know your students and what their concerns are and what their strengths and weaknesses are, you can, you can choose books intentionally that address those concerns in a way that's not threatening to them or makes them feel uncomfortable. Um, I'm a, I mean, I'm a librarian now, so, um, but my entire career I have found that using literacy and using books to have those discussions, those, um,

00:04:47,239 --> 00:06:51,719 [Speaker 1]

safe discussions with students and, um, honestly found the same as a parent, uh, I, I use books a lot with my own children as a parent as well, uh, to bring up, um, difficult subjects or

things that might not be comfortable to just talk about. Um, you know, I think adults are all the same. I have used books in that way with teachers in staff meetings and in, um, professional development situations. It just generates, um, a more authentic discussion and puts people in a safe place because you're talking about the character instead of you. Um, so when I, I would set up my classroom in that way, also very, um, also intentionally just setting up your classroom in a way that there's always a place where, um, students see themselves, literally pictures of themselves [laughs], but also in, again, in any, um, books or posters or anything you have that you have a diverse array of, um, of faces and of people and of cultures so that everyone feels included and welcome and can see themselves. And, um, that as a, as a librarian has been-That was one of my first goals, was to make the library feel welcoming by making sure there are always books that represent every single student and adult in the building [laughs]. And, uh, it's probably more powerful than I think some people realize, but I've had, um, teachers say to me, and students say to me, they can't quite put it into words, but they will say, or they will feel like they'll just give me, um, almost a sigh of relief. Like a, "Ah." And, um, you know, like, "I belong here. It's okay." And, and without me saying a word, just whatever I had surrounding in the environment, um, can do that.

00:06:51,719 --> 00:07:10,559 [Speaker 1]

At school, the same thing. You walk into a school and it feels sterile, and, um, there's either no pictures of children [laughs], or there's pictures of, you know, I say store-bought children. N- n- nobody from, really from there. Or, um,

00:07:10,559 --> 00:07:13,179 [Speaker 1]

or again, just

00:07:13,179 --> 00:07:23,099 [Speaker 1]

photos of people who don't represent the actual demographics of a school. It just speaks volumes. Um, and

00:07:23,099 --> 00:07:25,039 [Speaker 1]

I can know

00:07:25,039 --> 00:07:33,539 [Speaker 1]

in a moment when I walk into school. I can feel whether the culture is welcoming or not.

00:07:33,539 --> 00:08:00,299 [Speaker 0]

Ms. Paula Januzzi Godfrey talked about a lot of strategies that are normalized in schools. And yet, when looked at closely, are about making sure all students feel as they belong. This idea of belonging in a school space is important, and something that I will address in chapter five. Let's think about it, though. How does belonging impact our ability to learn well?

00:08:00,299 --> 00:08:24,879 [Speaker 0]

Next, you will hear from Ms. Kimberly Jones as she discusses how she applies culturally sustaining pedagogy and practices in her classroom. She will use the term Holocaust educator. This means that she has completed a specialized training program to enhance her ability to teach about the Holocaust and genocide effectively. You will also hear me make asking a more direct question in this interview clip.

00:08:24,879 --> 00:09:30,939 [Speaker 2]

So, I think the first one, the first things is attendance. I think in schools where, um, technology is being utilized appropriately, but more importantly, we're culturally sustaining, teaching is taking place, your students want to be there. They find community and belonging in the classroom, and so you see high rates of attendance. You see enthusiasm for, for learning, for, for being at school. For, you know, engaging in what the, whatever the next project or, or learning goal is going to be. So, I think that's sort of a, a hard and fast thing. When our students are engaged, they show up. And one of the, the chronic bits of feedback we get is we explore things like chronic absenteeism, is a feeling of disengagement from students. And I think that happens at, at all levels. Of course, there are a lot of factors that impact, um, school attendance, but particularly for, um,

00:09:30,939 --> 00:10:21,199 [Speaker 2]

issues that are not tied to crises or trauma. Very often, particularly at the secondary level, what we hear from students is a lack of engagement and a lack of seeing how what they're learning is relevant, and they simply make the choice not to show up. So, when you lean into culturally sustaining and, and relevant practice and you leverage where our students spend a lot of their time, which is engaging with technology, and you leverage both of those things toward learning outcomes, they feel a greater buy-in. They, they see how it applies to their

world. They feel like it matters and it makes sense for their long-term goals. And, um, that's one of the first things I look for. Are, are the kids there? Are they there and be engaged?

00:10:21,199 --> 00:10:21,219 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:10:21,219 --> 00:11:16,239 [Speaker 2]

And then, of course, you're gonna see the academic outcomes, the, the quantitative measures. Um, graduation rates improve, student growth and proficiency improve, and ultimately, those, those sort of summative scores that carry a lot of weight with people. You know, your EOC, your EOG scores, your class grades, um, those sorts of hard bits of data. I think both of those are markers of success. And then, I think there's also the qualif- the, the qualitative feedback that you can get from kids in, you know, their own words. That I really enjoyed this lesson, or I really liked this class, or that was really interesting. Or, oh my gosh, this makes sense in a way that it never made before. I think all of those are, are great measures to see if, if your strategies are working well.

00:11:16,239 --> 00:11:31,139 [Speaker 0]

So, kind of going off that last part, the qualitative feedback from your, um, students. Can you think of like a particular, like lesson or feedback from a student that really stands out to you about how culturally sustaining practices really changed that student's outlook?

00:11:31,139 --> 00:11:51,439 [Speaker 2]

Absolutely. I am a human rights educator, um, a Holocaust educator, um, specifically. And at the end of every unit, but specifically, my units that focus on human rights and, um,

00:11:51,439 --> 00:13:33,027 [Speaker 2]

episodes of sort of systematic persecution or repression if we're talking about, you know, the Native American or indigenous removal. If we're talking about American chattel slavery, if we're talking about something like the Holocaust. At the end of those units, I ask my students, "How do you feel about the ways in which we engaged with this topic? What did you learn? How, how are you going to apply this after the fact?" And I have, year over year over year, I've gotten amazing feedback from students. Many times, students who belong to

these groups. I've heard from Jewish students, um, who have said, "You know, I have learned about the Shoah-"... every year in my own family, um, for our own reasons. But I've learned more in this course, um, beyond simply what was done to Jewish people, to actually celebrate Jewish culture, both before and after the Holocaust. When talking about, uh, indigenous culture, hearing from my students how meaningful it was to have contemporary and modern depictions of native life and culture, and not simply what was done to, you know, their ancestors or their forefathers in the founding of this country. To hear from, you know, my African American students how significant it is to have something other than Black trauma [laughs] taught, to, to have Black joy, Black creativity, Black innovation celebrated and, and lifted. And again, to try to,

00:13:33,027 --> 00:13:49,187 [Speaker 2]

in whatever I'm teaching, to give my kids the opportunity to provide their own reflective feedback. And they get points for their honesty. Like, that is not just a, a question I put on the test for, um, data collection sake.

00:13:49,187 --> 00:13:49,407 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:13:49,407 --> 00:14:14,307 [Speaker 2]

Their voices matter. And so, I give it a quantifiable point value on the test. "Tell me what you think." And they're allowed to critique like, "I wish we had done more of this," or, "Could you include some of this next year?" Or, "I had this question that we never quite answered." But the answers that I've gotten from my students in sort of those sections of my assessments have been

00:14:14,307 --> 00:14:20,287 [Speaker 2]

amazing. They have guided my, um,

00:14:20,287 --> 00:14:54,047 [Speaker 2]

revisiting of, of, of my, my units. They've guided new areas of exploration. They've led me to abandon certain aspects of, of lessons that I've taught and replaced them with other things. And of course, you're constantly, every group of students is gonna be different. And so every

year, that question on, on these unit tests give me really meaningful real-time data that I can apply either later in the year or in the next year's version of that same lesson.

00:14:54,047 --> 00:15:40,687 [Speaker 0]

Ms. Kimberly Jones demonstrates strategies that are driven by student voice and impact. She is constantly describing situations where she is asking for student feedback and how content makes them feel. This allows students to openly and freely discuss how systems and structures in their own education impact their thoughts, which is a key hallmark of Frede that we will discuss further later on. [instrumental music plays] Dr. Gabriel will also discuss how he views culturally sustaining pedagogy in the context of his district as a whole. In this clip, he mentions the Parents' Bill of Rights, which is a bill that was passed through the Senate in North Carolina stating that parents have a right to direct the upbringing of their children in regards to education, healthcare, and mental health.

00:15:40,687 --> 00:16:23,487 [Speaker 3]

Um, first off, to kind of give you an idea about our system, um, we are the eighth most diverse system in the state of North Carolina, um, by percentage. And that's, uh, ranking by niche. And I think we're 84th in America. So, when you, you think from that lens, um, you don't really survive in Newton-Conover very long as an educator if you don't value diversity. And when you consider the teaching force is primarily, uh, A, female and B, white, um, that teaching force has to want to work with children that may not look like them, think like them, talk like them. So, um, I, I heard a quote by Covey that I really liked said, uh, "If you want to make small changes, change behavior. But if you really want to make big changes, you, you change paradigms."

00:16:23,487 --> 00:16:23,987 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:16:23,987 --> 00:18:06,787 [Speaker 3]

So, the paradigm is so important. And, uh, in Newton-Conover that's what we talk about, is if you're truly not whole child focused, um, you know, it's always Maslow before Bloom's. And, uh, you have to truly care about the individual. So, that's the, the initial step for any initiative, and especially when you're talking about, uh, tweaking, uh, how you teach and what you teach, to not only meet the standard but also hit the learner where they're at. And, uh, coming from their, their, uh, respective, uh, perspective. Um, you have to begin with the,

the thought that that kid matters, and, uh, that I really want to know what their perspective is. Uh, 'cause often in education, you lose things there, and it never goes beyond it. Um, so in terms of what does that look like, uh, in our district, we utilize a, a wide variety of survey instruments. Um, I know that with the whole Parent Bill of Rights, you know, there are layers to that we have to be very cautious about. So, we usually call them interest inventories. And, uh, what we do is, in terms of trying to get an idea of where's this kid coming from. So, what is their, you know, uh, especially children who are, are not native, uh, to, to, uh, North Carolina or even the United States, we want to know where they're coming from. Um, because the beauty of technology is it's much easier to create lessons or modify things, uh, to, to, uh, reflect a culture a little bit different than our own, than it was when I was in the classroom. You may have five different nationalities [knocks on table] in the same class of 25 or less. And when you really think about that, how do you hit all those areas? Um, and it's not the easiest thing in the world to do. But, um, we also have a dual immersion program. And so I think what has helped us is looking at how

00:18:06,787 --> 00:18:21,867 [Speaker 3]

instruction happens there in two different languages. And we've tried to have a lot of our, uh, PLCs, um, engaged and centered on that exact, uh, topic of figuring out where's the kid in, in terms of ability and interest. Because both of those are important.

00:18:21,867 --> 00:18:21,907 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:18:21,907 --> 00:18:31,807 [Speaker 3]

And then that third layer is background. So, you put those three together, you can, uh, better hit a kid where they're at. Um, because ultimately, fear has to be mitigated.

00:18:31,807 --> 00:18:32,027 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:18:32,027 --> 00:18:58,928 [Speaker 3]

Uh, I think for, for children, whether you're learning something for the first time, uh, whether you're coming into a class where you're the only person that looks like you do, uh,

all of that..... uh, that environment. Those environmental variables have to be addressed. And so, uh, the first layer of our teachers, we expect them to know their kids. So step one, if a child's been in your room longer than a day, you need to know certain things about them. You know? And at least the bare minimum is their name, okay?

00:18:58,928 --> 00:18:59,428 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:18:59,428 --> 00:19:25,407 [Speaker 3]

Okay? Uh, that's integral. Uh, and then number two, uh, if they are from somewhere else, maybe another state, 'cause they, we found regionally, uh, there are definite differences in our nation alone, know where they're from. Uh, because I think that also is important. And then the third piece we'll talk about interests. 'Cause again, if you wanna really, uh, latch on to a kid, you find a way to incorporate instructional materials that is, hit something they're interested in.

00:19:25,407 --> 00:19:25,427 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:19:25,427 --> 00:21:06,327 [Speaker 3]

Uh, so that kid in the very back of your class, I learned as a high school teacher, I had, uh, some of the roughest kids I taught were very much into cars. So any way, shape, or form that I could incorporate anything to do with automotive, uh, whether it's the mechanics of, uh, different styles of models, if I could pull that in at all. Uh, or even in journal topics. Uh, and journal topics are also very key to learn more about your students. Um, utilize those. So regardless of the level. We talked about it more with elementary, um, but I think middle and high it's just as important to do. So I know that's a huge, broad, wide answer. In terms of assessment, um, I will tell you that as we have gotten better at meeting kids where they are, um, our student performance has gone up, both in growth and in actual performance. So, we utilize something called Pathways. And so this, it's, uh, it's, it's based on the whole standards-based grading model where you start each unit with basically what the final assessment is going to be, and you see where kids land. And we, in essence, track kids three different levels, low, medium, and high, in terms of their, their pre-test. And the activities that you tend to embed in those three different pathways often is reflective, again, if you know your kids' background and interests, you can find things that, uh, as, as far as activities

that you're able to differentiate a little more. The ultimate assessment is the same. So the, the pre-test and the post-test are the same. But it's what you do in the three pathways we found that has actually helped move not only our student engagement forward, but our achievement. Because sometimes it's very, it's- it's, uh, it's- it's skill pieces they're not getting, and in other cases, it's actual comprehension.

00:21:06,327 --> 00:21:06,487 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:21:06,487 --> 00:21:49,307 [Speaker 3]

And so as you stride that, that makes a huge, huge difference, uh, in outcomes and performance. Uh, student attendance. I think if kids are engaged in what you're doing, they're gonna come to school. Um, and not only come to school, but they're gonna come ready. So, you know, that- that is definitely something I've noticed in 12 years as we have gotten, uh, a core of teachers. Um, and I'll tell you, the international staff we have, have also- have also helped because we've allowed them to lead, uh, some of our PD, especially under their respective roofs. Uh, and to see how they've kind of came out of their shells and realized how much they have to offer, uh, to the, to the discussion on how do we get kids to learn. Um, that, uh, that's actually been really, really good. Equity

00:21:49,307 --> 00:22:46,447 [Speaker 3]

is a key, but it also, as I said, initially, it starts with valuing the kid as an individual. So we think of equity mainly as race, uh, but that's also gender. Um, so, you know, if a child, you know, regardless of what they identify as, they need to see works that include people that look like them. So as a little boy, it was very tough for me if all I was reading about was, was young ladies, you know? Or adults, even. I needed to have some, at some point, a character in a story needed to be a young boy, 'cause then I could attach. That's why Indian in the Cupboard was my, one of my favorite books as a little kid. Well, probably one of the first ones that had minimal pictures in it, that I read from cover to cover. And that was why, 'cause it was a boy about my age and had a very vivid imagination, and I got sucked in immediately. And my teacher knew that, so I feel pretty confident that was, that was not something that she typically had as a independent reading option. But she said, "I think you'll like this." And she was actually correct.

00:22:46,447 --> 00:23:20,807 [Speaker 3]

Um, in terms of climate, uh, we have a lot of what we call our morning meetings, uh, where the teacher is, in essence, gives a general topic but is kind of reading the room, uh, reading their kids. Are they really revved up about something? Do you see a kid with their head down, looking upset? And then we utilize, uh, our, one of our counselors. Uh, we have admin as well, that if there's one of the teachers can just message, have them come check on the child. Uh, and often help take care if there's something outside the room that they're dealing with, get that dealt with, and then they come back in more ready.

00:23:20,807 --> 00:23:42,747 [Speaker 0]

Dr. Gabriel brings up an important thought in reminding us that equity includes both race and gender. And when we consider this from an intersectionality perspective, we can wonder whether this book, or books like it, would have resonated with him if he had been a Black boy instead of a White boy.

00:23:42,747 --> 00:24:36,887 [Speaker 0]

Furthermore, we have to consider the implications if this book was handed to a child of Native American descent, or taught in a classroom on one of our reservations. These thoughts are critical to educators creating truly inclusive and culturally sustaining classrooms, because every student has a multitude of identities that should be respected. We have the ability to look back and see how problematic this choice would have been for numerous other students, and it's this thought process that should drive our choices and curriculum forward. In order to avoid this potential harm to students, it is critical that teachers be aware and responsive to their students and follow culturally sustaining practices that highlight and sustain who each individual student is and welcomes them fully. Lastly, Ms. Jill Irwin-Hardot will discuss some personal experiences and how they brought her to a strong belief in the importance of culturally sustaining pedagogies in the classroom. You will also hear me asking a direct question in this interview clip.

00:24:40,227 --> 00:25:29,427 [Speaker 4]

I think, um, just from my experience, in order for, first of all, to have that culturally sustaining, um, pedagogy in place, you have to really, um, work with teachers to help them understand what that means. Um, I think about 27, 28 years ago when I set foot from southwestern Pennsylvania into, um, southern California, 15 miles from Mexico, and, um, realized that 65% of my students were ELL, um, from a completely different culture than my own, I was not properly trained on how to respond to students. And I remember yelling at a student to look me in the eye,

00:25:29,427 --> 00:26:13,027 [Speaker 4]

and not realizing that culturally by looking down, the child was being respectful. And so, I think s- universities in preparing teachers need to make them aware of all of what we bring when we come from our own cultural backgrounds, and then what that looks like in a classroom. But then I think also understanding how technology can help bridge that gap. Because if I had been given opportunity to research the culture that I was, um, moving in to teach, I would've been a little bit more aware of the social perspective. To get back to the question, what that looks like,

00:26:13,027 --> 00:26:26,368 [Speaker 4]

um, respectfully, or what that looks like successfully is that there is no distinct curriculum that is brought by one culture. There is no desire to

00:26:26,368 --> 00:26:37,907 [Speaker 4]

do forced assimilation. It is allowing students voice, choice, and agency in what they study, what they learn, and how they interact with that.

00:26:37,907 --> 00:26:57,307 [Speaker 5]

So, thinking about all your experiences, can you, like, pinpoint, like, one time or lesson that you feel like you either did it really well, or you saw a teacher do it really well, like, using those practices and technology to, like, close those,

00:26:57,307 --> 00:27:02,947 [Speaker 5]

um, limits of understanding, shall we say, between different cultures?

00:27:02,947 --> 00:27:55,827 [Speaker 4]

So, um, about 10 years ago, I had the opportunity to teach a book called Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko. Um, it is a piece of literature about, um, Tao, um, a Native American who was forced to fight in, um, an American war, the World War II. His cousin was a full-blooded Native American, but Tao was half-blooded, and his family did not fully accept him as a Native American. The Americans didn't fully accept him as a white man. And so, this book really delves into the ceremony that Tao must go through to cleanse himself coming back from the war. Um, and the ceremonies of the

00:27:55,827 --> 00:29:26,607 [Speaker 4]

Native Americans don't fully work on Tao's, um, traumatic experience and healing him, as well as the, um, white man's treatments don't fully work for him. And so, he seeks to find sort of a hybrid of these two treatments. And, um, I'll never forget because I had the students really dive deep into investigating the time period in which the book was written. Leslie Marmon Silko won, um, the McCarthy Scholarship to write this. She wrote it during the Vietnam War. But then, the time period in which it was set and what it was like for, um, Native Americans during World War II, um, who went over and fought people who looked more like them than the people they were fighting for. And then, really getting them to understand the time period in which it was being read. And, um, the struggle that students had with the language being used and the tenses. Um, the, the novel's written in a circular. Uh, it starts where it ends, which is very commonplace in Native American culture. It's told like a story. Um, it involves poetry from the, the native tongue, um, translated into, uh, the white man's language. And so, this- as the students delved deeper into understanding Native American culture, Native American practice, Native American ideologies, the book began to make more sense to them.

00:29:26,607 --> 00:30:27,007 [Speaker 4]

And so, then we had conversations about, how does that play into other texts that we studied? And at the time, I was teaching IB English, and I had one, um, one African American student in my class. All the other students were white. And we read August Wilson's *Fences*, which again, is a play that deals with, um, cultural change in, um, the, I guess it was during the 1950s and '60s as the, um, March on Washington is happening. And the students were having a difficult time understanding why the main character didn't want his son to go to college and be drafted to the South to play ball. Because they didn't understand at that time period, he wouldn't be on the campus. It was still a time of segregation. He would have to live off campus. He may not even be able to attend classes.

00:30:27,007 --> 00:31:12,452 [Speaker 4]

So, it really made, I think, my students and myself as an educator aware that just because I might know the background of these stories, my students don't. And just because they go to school with students who look different from them, it doesn't mean they understand their cultural experiences.... and it really helped me understand the importance of having students research before they actually delve deeply into a text, and, um, the, the importance of using technology as a tool for depth of research, and not just, um, getting them to read a book online or post an article or an assignment to me.

00:31:12,452 --> 00:32:35,271 [Speaker 0]

Before we get into our more detailed analysis, since we've had two book mentions in back-to-back segments, I think we should acknowledge the importance of literature curriculum in education. Ms. Jones, Ms. Erwin Hardel, Ms. Jannuzi Godfrey, and Dr. Gabriel have all at some point mentioned the importance of books, the selection of books, and the discussions that occur around them as a critical aspect of culturally sustaining work in schools. By choosing books that represent diverse sets of students, or even beyond that, exposing a less diverse set of students to other cultures and linguistic backgrounds, educators are working against deficit approaches to teaching and learning [chime]. Instead, books like *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko are chosen to specifically support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence [chime]. The importance of teacher facilitation of the discussions of these books cannot be understated. Choosing the book is just the first step, but the discussion must be closely prepared, structured, and monitored to honor students and to deepen cultural understanding across all students. This work is complicated and difficult, but in order to push back against the deficit approaches and move towards true humanizing resource approaches in education, it is essential [chime].

00:32:35,271 --> 00:33:50,071 [Speaker 0]

Throughout the interviews, each educator spoke about how they supported culturally sustaining practices in unique ways. Hopefully, as an audience, we were all able to see how the intention was support and student growth for all, not just a few students who meet a specific criteria. It's important to connect these actions and choices back to the critical theorists that choose to view education differently. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* emphasizes education as a liberatory practice where students and teachers engage in dialogue to develop critical consciousness [chime]. This idea is reflected in Paula Jannuzzi Godfrey's approach to classroom discussions, where students explore texts that raise questions about identity, oppression, and justice. By using books to foster discussion about emotions and social issues, she moves away from the banking model of education, where knowledge is deposited into passive students, and instead creates an interactive learning space that encourages dialogue and reflection [chime]. Mrs. Jones' emphasis on student feedback and engagement in human rights education also aligns with Freire's pedagogy. Her use of student reflections on historical oppression helps them analyze social structures critically, making learning not just about content, but about transformation.

00:33:50,071 --> 00:33:53,711 [Speaker 0]

This kind of education aligns with Freire's belief

00:33:53,711 --> 00:36:09,291 [Speaker 0]

that students must not only understand history, but also use their knowledge to challenge injustice [chime]. Dr. Gabriel's focus on knowing students' backgrounds before engaging them in learning also speaks to Freirian pedagogy. By prioritizing relationships and student identity, he ensures that learning is relevant and meaningful, which is key to critical pedagogy [chime]. Mrs. Jones' discussion of moving beyond Black trauma in African American history, and instead uplifting Black joy and innovation embodies Giroux's belief of counter-narratives [chime]. Instead of reinforcing narratives of victimhood, she instead ensures students see themselves as creators of history, which resists the narratives often found in textbooks. Dr. Gabriel's discussion of changing paradigms rather than just behaviors is also developed from Giroux. He understands that teachers must do more than apply new strategies. They must shift their fundamental perspectives on students, power, and knowledge [chime]. By embedding equity into teacher professional development and ensuring culturally relevant materials, he is fostering a culture of resistance against the dominant Eurocentric curriculum [chime]. Ms. Jannuzzi Godfrey's approach to classroom design, where students literally see themselves in books and posters, also aligns with Giroux's idea that representation matters in cultural production [chime]. Schools as spaces where dominant ideologies are reinforced must instead become sites of counter-hegemonic struggle, where marginalized voices are uplifted. Gloria Ladson-Billings' concept of culturally relevant pedagogy are used at effective teaching for marginalized students must, one, ensure academic success, two, develop cultural competence, and three, foster sociopolitical consciousness [chime]. Ms. Jannuzzi Godfrey's approach to book selection aligns with Gloria Ladson-Billings' concept of culturally relevant pedagogy by ensuring students see their identities reflected in the curriculum, which fosters both cultural competence and engagement [chime]. Similarly, Mrs. Jones' use of culturally responsive human rights education ensures that students not only learn about oppression, but also celebrate their own cultures.

00:36:09,291 --> 00:36:26,911 [Speaker 0]

Dr. Gabriel emphasis on equity beyond race to include gender and other identities reflects Ladson-Billings' broader understanding of identity-based education [chime]. He ensures that teachers acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of students, and intentionally design instruction that resonates with their experiences.

00:36:26,911 --> 00:36:48,751 [Speaker 0]

Finally, Ms. Erwin Hardel's reflection on her early cultural misunderstandings, such as demanding eye contact from a student, highlights the necessity of culturally relevant teaching. Her realization that cultural awareness must be embedded in teacher education supports Ladson-Billings' argument that educators must unlearn biases and adopt more inclusive teaching strategies [chime].

00:36:48,751 --> 00:37:16,511 [Speaker 0]

Ms. Jones' reflections on incorporating modern depictions of indigenous life rather than just historical oppression aligns with Django Paris's culturally sustaining pedagogy [chime]. Rather than treating culture as static, she ensures students see their cultures as vibrant and evolving. Similarly, her approach to student feedback and revising lessons year after year embodies culturally sustaining pedagogies' commitment to adapting pedagogy to students' lived experiences.

00:37:16,511 --> 00:38:23,231 [Speaker 0]

Dr. Gabriel's discussion of interest inventories and his district's dual immersion program also align with culturally sustaining pedagogy by ensuring students' linguistic and cultural diversity is not just acknowledged, but actively sustained [chime]. Rather than forcing assimilation, his approach values multilingualism and diverse cultural expressions. Across these interviews, we see a constant effort to challenge traditional education models and foster student engagement through culturally relevant and sustaining practices. Each educator in different ways embodies critical pedagogy by rejecting the one-size-fits-all education, and instead embracing dynamic, student-centered approaches that resist oppression and celebrate diversity. Thanks for joining me as we explored such an important theme in today's educational environment, and join me next time as we continue to unpack these interviews. [upbeat music]