

Sensibilidad cultural y preguntas para reflexionar

(link for viewing at end of transcript)

Linda Warren: Now we are going to turn our attention to culture. Mentor-coaches and protégés often come from different cultural backgrounds so a first step in demonstrating respect is learning about each other's culture. When we learn to understand and appreciate the differences in each other's values and histories, it helps us to be culturally sensitive. Sometimes cultural differences can interfere with communication, teaching, and learning.

During those times, protégés and mentor-coaches need to feel free to talk about differences. Negotiate options and strategies and reach shared understanding and solutions. Linda and Patty what are some more thoughts on values and culture?

Patty Hnatiuk: Cultural differences can also enrich the relationship between mentor-coaches and protégés. By sharing values and cultural differences mentor-coaches and protégés come to know each other more fully. Each person has something to bring to the relationship -- something new about themselves and about our society that can be a value in the teaching and the learning that is going on in the adult relationships as well as in relationships with children and families.

Linda Campanaro-Glover: It's a wonderful opportunity to learn about each other and tell stories and really... It's a time-honored way of sharing information -- being a storyteller, telling each other about how you learned to bake bread or what was your most favorite activity with your grandmother and what did you do in your past as you were growing and bring that into the relationship.

Linda Warren: So you're helping people to bring their very differences into the relationship in a positive way and make that part of the dialogue and the communication?

Linda Campanaro-Glover: And the sense of personal history that, again, adds to the trusting relationship that you have. It's wonderful because coming from an indigenous background everyone always wants to know as the mentor-coach, "What are some of the things that you do that's different from what I do?"

My protégés love to share their stories of their grandmothers and their grandfathers and where they came from. Did they grow up in a city? Did they grow up in the country? Have they been in the area forever? In the area that I come from, there are...is a lot of activity and people moving from one place to another.

And it's wonderful to find out what have your travels been. Where have you seen great things happening with different experiences with children? How does that affect their learning? How can they learn if you're closer to the ocean versus living in the mountains or growing up in the inner city? What did you do for literacy experiences? And so, that cultural dialogue is a wonderful opportunity to have with each other.

Patty Hnatiuk: I really agree with that too. And it helps us to learn about other perspectives and see that other perspectives have something to offer that we might not have thought of -- that these values that we share across generations and cultures help us to come to some commonalities and to work on some of those differences that sometimes come up where we don't understand what to do we...

When we have a trusting relationship we can talk it through -- negotiate it with each other, with parents and help to provide more culturally consistent care and education for the children, which is the bottom line.

Linda Warren: Yeah, I think the same holds true for protégés' relationships with children. We know that children develop a sense of who they are through their culture so to understand the children we serve, we need to learn about their culture and their values from family members. When protégés use that information in their daily practice with

children, they are demonstrating cultural sensitivity.

Culture is the fundamental building block of identity. Our definition of cultural sensitivity comes from the California video magazine and video called Ten Keys to Culturally Sensitive Child Care. "Through cultural learning children gain a feeling of belonging, a sense of personal history, and a security in knowing who they are and where they come from. Early child care that respects time-honored cultural rules helps children develop a secure sense of self.

The gifts that children receive from an infancy grounded in their home culture are confidence, competence and connection." For children to receive these gifts, culturally sensitive care is crucial. OK. Let's talk a little bit about how we can help children to use those gifts and help protégés help children receive those gifts.

Linda Campanaro-Glover: The most important way in a very diverse group of children is to celebrate the child's home language because that's really important from a literacy perspective and knowing your families, working with your protégés as a team to find out who are the families that you serve, inviting the families into your classroom into your environment -- as a home visitor, bringing them to the group experiences and bringing their ideas and stories.

We have a wonderful book that we use when we bring families into a home visit group experience -- it's called Knots on a Counting Rope and it helps the parent feel more comfortable about talking about who they are, what is their culture because it's a story about how a young Native boy got his name and his grandfather is telling the story over and over and over again and every time he tells the story, he ties a knot in the rope.

Well our families come in -- and they take turns coming in different times throughout the beginning of the year -- and talk about how they named their children or the children like to tell the story. And they do a beautiful family bulletin board about "My name is... and this is why I am named..." And just from all of the different cultures it starts building a dialogue. It gives the home visitor or teacher an opportunity to learn and hear it directly from the families.

Linda Warren: That is such a fabulous book too because you can use it in so many different ways so it does... It crosses across cultures and across concepts. I'm glad you mentioned that, but I think a really important point that you made is that we learn about language and cultural rituals and parent priorities as we learn...as we celebrate children's home language and some of the rituals and routines in the home.

Linda Campanaro-Glover: And remembering that our print awareness should validate all of the families that we serve. Asking parents to participate with that in making it meaningful, intentional print so "My name is..." can be written in the home language. It also can be written in English. It's really a wonderful opportunity to bring the home language and the culture into the classroom.

It's a great way to... Our next thing that we might do would be... One protégé started a family book and went on home visits and went and took pictures of the family in the house or wherever they were and then put that in our library area and they were able to write "Emmanuel's Home," "Serena's Farm." So now we're putting some usable print, the literacy piece starts to connect with the culture and it can be written in the child's home language as well.

Patty Hnatiuk: We did the same thing in a program that I worked in, as well. We call them "All About Me" books and we had photographs of the children at home as well as in the program, but they told us the stories to put under the captions -- under each of the pictures -- and we covered it with clear contact paper and then at the end of the year, gave each book, of course, to the families to take home.

Those books were very popular and they really helped the children to get to know each other better and the staff really enjoyed putting them together as well. Linda Campanaro-Glover: And don't they just love to read it over and over and over again? Patty Hnatiuk: Yeah.

Linda Campanaro-Glover: It's the favorite... When you ask a child, you know, they bring the book to you and they say "Will you read this?" It's usually one of the homemade books. Patty Hnatiuk: Right.

Linda Warren: And this is... We really want you to share this later on as we're moving into the child outcomes

framework for language and literacy. Linda Warren: Patty did you have any resources that you wanted to share? I know you had...

Patty Hnatiuk: Well we have the Anti-Bias Curriculum which I wanted to highlight for folks. We're about to talk about the definition of bias. This is a resource that Head Start and Early Start programs have used for some years now. It's still relevant. It's still helpful. And it definitely supports the discussion that we're having today.

Linda Warren: Thank you. Now you're going to take some time with your facilitator to discuss cultural sensitivity. Stop the tape now and resume playing when you are finished with your conversations.

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