
Preface

This book has been writing itself as long as Bonnie and I have known one another. It has percolated as aromatically as the coffees we have shared over the past twelve years. We are very different women, yet we are united in our appreciation of things rich in flavor and fairness.

Creating Culturally Considerate Schools: Educating Without Bias blends the best of our individual work. Bonnie is a veteran educator and author with five titles to her credit and three more in the works. I am a veteran clinician and clinical educator with one title of which I am very proud and another in press. My contribution to this book begins with the phrase *culturally considerate*, a central theme of *Culturally Considerate School Counseling: Helping Without Bias*, published by Corwin in 2010. I am partial to this term because, for me, it opens the dialogue to include the parallel journey implicit in personal growth and professional development. Cultural *consideration* expands the notion of culture and allows for the variations within groups as well as between them.

As a result of my personal history, multidisciplinary training, and professional experience, I have come to use a very broad definition of culture. I value the importance of critical race theory, disability rights, and antipoverty initiatives, though make every attempt to avoid assumptions or prejudicial words that limit culture to issues of race and ethnicity, disability or socioeconomic status. Instead, I *consider* Heritage and Historic Memory, Geographic or Regional Origin, Circumstance and Situation, and Affinity or Relational Bonds. For me, this is the essence of intersectionality.

As I begin writing this book, forty-seven years have passed since Martin Luther King Jr. gave a speech at the Washington Monument sharing his dream for children. This week, Glenn Beck, with a dream of his own, rallied supporters to the same site. That is the beauty of

our country. Two men with differing dreams can stand free in one place and share visions of a perfect world.

I see clients in a lovely office in an upwardly mobile part of the city. For most of my career, I had my own office. This is the first time I have sublet space in thirty years. Some of my clients have followed me from social service agencies to private practice. They do not always fit in with the décor of my current clinical space. I have been told that some of my clients “bother” other clients. I ask why. One day I was told one of my clients wore camouflage pants. I asked which one? I had two clients who wore camouflage pants that day. One was a mentally ill man who takes Medicaid transportation to my office from a rural county each week. The other was a petite woman who was delighted to show me the smart pair of camouflage leggings she found on sale at Neiman Marcus.

A single mom and her two teenage children move out of the apartment next door to me. They have lived there less than six months. She tells me the rent has been raised and it seems like very much to pay for a two-bedroom apartment. She is right. Two blond, blue-eyed university students move in a few weeks after Mrs. Lopez, Maria, and Jaime move out. I am saddened to think that we like our baseball players to be from Latin America but not our neighbors.

Each day I wonder what children make of events and incidences like these. Each day I wonder if an adult is correcting the misinformation or reinforcing it. What is that old sixties saying? *If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.* I choose to be part of the solution. I assume if you have picked up this book, so do you.

Kim Anderson

From the Desk of Bonnie Davis

During workshops, I encounter teacher after teacher asking me how they can learn “what they don’t know they don’t know” about the populations of students they teach. These are well-meaning professionals who want answers and actions. I always suggest an inward journey: to learn what I don’t know I don’t know requires I look inside myself. Fortunately, in this book, I am able to both look inside myself, and at the same time, dialogue with a therapist about what I understand to be true. Hopefully, our reflective journeys in connection with Kim’s reflective comments offer you, the reader, another method for examining our collective biases, expectations, hopes, and dreams for ourselves as educators and for our students as learners.

During my career, I taught English for 30 years in public schools; in addition, I taught in two homeless shelters, a runaway shelter for adolescents, a maximum security men's prison, and five colleges and universities. Since then I have been in hundreds of classrooms as a mentor, literacy coach, facilitator, and observer. Even though I have tons of classroom experience, I still do not know you, your staff members, or your students. I do not know your daily travails, joys, failures, and successes. But I do know so many places where I failed to do what I could have done to have created a classroom more culturally considerate for all students; at the same time, I know strategies I used that did create a culture of consideration. In essence, in this book you find descriptions of both failure and success, both daily travails and joys with suggestions for you as you work to create culturally considerate schools.

We call our work "culturally considerate" not because we believe you are not already practicing consideration of all students, but rather because we offer a framework for you to embed the work within as you examine your practice. This book is a guide, yet it is not a "should"—Kim and I present a framework for cultural consideration, and then you decide how to use it in your practice. One important difference between this book and my book of instructional strategies, *How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You: Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies*, is that in this book there is a framework for taking action along with the bigger picture of why action is a necessity. We present the why along with the how. The why is the big picture, the research, the psychology behind the behaviors and the actions. The how is the implementation. If you are interested in learning the "why" of your classroom and your school, this book offers you scenarios for reflection upon the "why" of our actions as educators in a unique way that combines psychology and educational pedagogy. There are also research-based instructional strategies and numerous suggestions for embedding cultural consideration within your daily work. Finally, by using the framework, you will find ways to access and assess your capacity for culturally considerate leadership and instruction.

During the past decade, I have been consulting, presenting workshops, and providing coaching support to several school districts throughout the United States. In some districts, I have returned again and again to do ongoing, job-embedded work where I have had the opportunity to do research to test my hypotheses and practice culturally considerate strategies. Much of what you read in my writings in this book is based on the work in these districts. In these districts, I have had the opportunity to work with teachers in rural, suburban, and urban settings on an ongoing basis to support teachers in implementing culturally responsive instruction. I am grateful for the opportunity to share our journey with you.

Bonnie Davis
