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Human-Centered and Sustainable English Teaching: Intercultural, Critical, and Decolonial Approaches

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Abstract

In transformative English education, intercultural communication is essential for human-centered and sustainable teaching practices. Defined as interaction “taking place between cultures,” it positions the teacher as a facilitator of dialogue, empathy, and global understanding. A human-centered approach recognizes learners as whole individuals whose cultures influence their beliefs, emotions, identities, learning styles, and ways of engaging with the world. This perspective encourages teachers to create learning experiences that honor each student’s background and promote meaningful participation.

A decolonial approach complements this pedagogy by critically examining the historical and structural dominance of Anglophone cultures in language education. It prompts students and teachers to question whose knowledge is prioritized, to amplify marginalized voices, and to integrate local and global perspectives equitably. This approach fosters both intercultural competence and critical consciousness, encouraging learners to value diverse histories, experiences, and ways of thinking, learning, and communicating, beyond visible categories such as ethnicity, language, religion, gender, or socioeconomic status.

Human-centered English teaching also emphasizes inclusion, collaboration, and meaningful teacher-student relationships. Creating a safe, supportive environment allows learners to feel valued and heard. Activities such as cultural research, guided discussions on cultural sensitivity, and exposure to diverse perspectives foster critical thinking, ethical awareness, and sustainable citizenship.

By integrating intercultural communication and decolonial approaches, English teaching prepares learners to navigate diversity responsibly, communicate ethically across cultures, and contribute positively to inclusive and sustainable communities. This integrated approach cultivates curiosity, adaptability, and respect for multiple perspectives, challenging hierarchies while promoting understanding and connection in a globalized world.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, Human-centered teaching, Transformative education, Decolonial pedagogy, Inclusive education, Cultural competence, Critical consciousness, Global awareness, Multicultural learning, Diversity and inclusion, Ethical communication, Learner-centered approach, Sustainable teaching practices, Culturally responsive instruction, Collaborative learning, Critical thinking, Curriculum design, Teacher-student relationships, Cross-cultural understanding, Innovative methodologies