

Becoming a Transformative Coach: Evoking the Power of the Culturally Responsive Teacher

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What we need, we already have. What we are searching for is already in us.
Gabrielle Harris

Abstract

This poster presentation is a description of a journey in becoming a culturally responsive coach and learning how to navigate through the inequities that the COVID-19 exposed, while trying to maintain a virtual teaching life within that quarantine. I learned to use the training and teaching that I had with culturally responsive teaching, virtual learning, social and emotional learning, and coaching. I integrated educational theories such as social learning with sociocultural theory (Freire, 2000; Nieto and Bode, 2018), and culturally responsive teachers (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1994) with appreciative inquiry and transformative coaching (Norwood, 2020). By participating in the Evidenced Based Coaching Program (EBC), I had opportunities to learn, unlearn, and relearn the coaching competencies and discover the boundaries between coaching and teaching. I utilized the narrative inquiry process (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) and reflective practice (Schön D., 1984) in order to explore my journey of becoming a culturally responsive coach.

Sociocultural Theory and Culturally Responsive Teachers

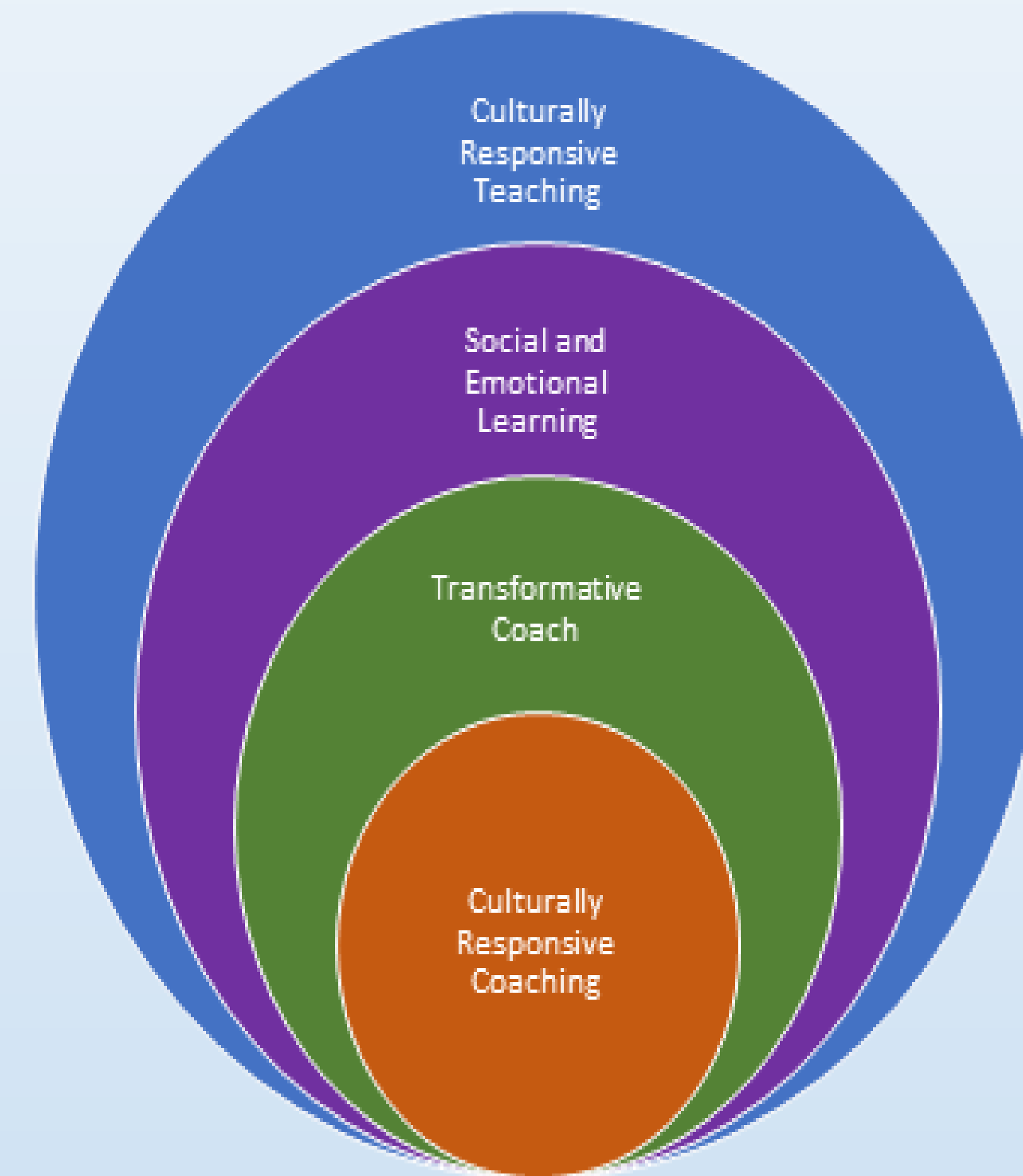
Culturally responsive teachers know more than just the multicultural background of various groups. They know how to respond to the social, cultural, and academic needs of their students and families.

Ladson-Billings stated that teachers needed to integrate the following criteria into their teaching practices in order to create culturally responsive classrooms. Students must

- experience academic success.
- develop and/or maintain cultural competence.
- develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (p. 160).

Culturally responsive teachers know their students well. They understand their students by using the cultural dimensions described by Nieto and Bode (2017). Some of these dimensions are family backgrounds, geography, home language, traditions, and favorites. This knowledge goes beyond the basics of favorite foods, colors, or pets. It delves deep into conversations with students in order to really know them.

Culturally responsive teachers teach their students to ask questions and learn how to advocate for themselves. In this safe environment, students learn how to challenge the learning process and school system (Mitchell, 2019).



Culturally Responsive Teaching and Transformational Coaching

Equity in coaching (Aguilar, 2020) and appreciative inquiry and transformational coaching intersect with culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1994) and transformative coaching (Goldsmith, et al)

These intersections create spaces within the areas of equity and social justice for both the educator and the transformative coach. They maintain leadership and communication theories in order to develop strong coaches, teachers, and leader.

Aguilar stated,, “Education is a vehicle to self-realization and freedom. Educational equity means every child, every day. Period” (p. 6-7). This perspective requires reflective practice of educators to explore their beliefs, assumptions, and biases. The intersections between equity in coaching and transformative coaching creates the culturally responsive teaching that Ladson-Billings and Gay believed to be the success for all students, particularly those in the marginalized spaces of the dominant society.

According to Norwood and Burke (2011) positive psychology theories cultivate positive emotion, character traits, and residence to strengthen learning experiences” (p. 213).

Campone (2011) described the use of coaching-specific research and theories as tools to draw conclusions about the coaching practices. She stated, “Nonetheless, coach practitioners can identify what is being studied, learn how coaching research is conducted, and use the results to inform their own practice” (p. 329).

Learning, Unlearning, and Relearning

I utilized the narrative inquiry process (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) and reflective practice (Schön D., 1984) in order to explore my journey of becoming a culturally responsive coach.

Learning

The school year, 2018-2019 started in such a strong way. I was on track to become a full professor at the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD), begin the Evidence Based Coaching (EBC) with Fielding Graduate University (FGU), and work with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) with Breathe for Change (B4C) Then the bottom dropped out from under the world because of COVID-19 and the Global Pandemic. Many of us in the world did not realize at the time that this was a Global Pandemic, rather an inconvenience and an interruption from the normal lives that everyone seemed to have.

The SEL*F and Mindfulness Movement program taught me the importance of taking care of myself first. Much like the call on the airplane to put an oxygen mask on first before assisting others, taking care of myself required relearning about self-care. I learned in self-care through a global pandemic to look to the uncertain future with peace and calm. When the anxiety invaded that peace and calm, I had tools and community to assist me. Sometimes it worked beautifully and other times I had to remind myself about self-care and asking for help. \

Unlearning

Much of the reflective process requires the learner to unlearn previous experiences in order to make space for new learning and experiences. During this traumatic year, I was put into a position to again challenge my beliefs about race and culture. Through the world of the Black Lives Matter, I was challenge to revisit my personal beliefs, assumptions that I carried with me. I had to unlearn the power and privilege that I have in my life because I am White, female, and middle class with a doctorate

Relearning

Because of the Global Pandemic, I was challenged to learn new skills for virtual learning and teaching. I had to learn how to take breaks and physically walk away from technology devices. In the past, video games and social media were tools that I used to take breaks. Now I had to learn to use other tools to refresh my mind and body. Relearning meant that I had to find different ways to take care of myself. I also had to take care of so many people in this time. My students were scared just like everyone else. I found that I had to be strong and brave. I taught them to use mindfulness movement and breathing techniques to create their own calm world. I also worried about my family. They became a different kind of priority for me. My family and I could not travel to be together, so we stayed connected through cell phones, Zoom, and social media. These virtual changes affected my world in so many ways.

Referemces

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