**Gender issues, cultural, linguistic, and Indigenous identity and perspectives**

Linguistically, I can only imagine how difficult for many EAL/D, people, who come to a new area, with limited knowledge of language of their environment. One of the biggest factors in hindering this knowledge, I believe, is time and opportunity to learn. It is important, regardless of culture, for schools, teachers and all students to be involved in the learning process together and ensuring supportive means and opportunity for practice, are provided to assist in new language development. As Gibbons writes, “children can develop two languages at once-if their first language development is supported” (1991, p. 7). Classrooms must ensure that each language used by students, is supported and displayed in the environment. To read that an EAL/D child’s “age-appropriate competence in [social] English” can take up to 7 years shows to what extend linguistics must be developed/supported (De Courcy, 2014). There is such a vast array of elements to consider:- the way language is taught; ways for practice and even assessment, and equally vital to think about “EAL/D progress rather than deficient English” (p. 62).

Indigenous (and other), cultures and identities can result in very different meanings of language, which need to be identified, and supported in their use, alongside SAE, enabling two-way teaching. It is disappointing to observe the comparative Table 4.2, regarding the disadvantage present in educational outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. (Andersen & Walter, 2014, p. 71). Much more needs to be done to give these students opportunity to keep up with the rest of the Australian population – a large part of this is keeping them engaged in their learning, as well as attending school.

Gender equity, encompassing both biological and cultural influences, also plays a part in learning outcomes. In my previous placement, what is seen as a boy vs girl thing, can impact on learning, or willingness to engage. An activity involving the use of different coloured paints (one colour was pink), saw one boy reaching for the pink paint, only to be addressed by another, saying “don’t use that colour – that’s only for girls”. Another issue that I experienced in this placement was one of the staff informing me, that within the culture of the families, it was often viewed that boys, did not take instruction from women due to their family belief/heritage.

Each person is an individual, regardless of gender, race, or religion, and no two people are the same. Classroom teaching must focus on providing each child with learning, that develops their “capacities and attributes”, irrespective of gender, linguistic ability, culture or social background. (Nagel & Scholes, 2014, p. 95).

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