

Bio-cultural diversity

“Linguistic and cultural diversity are as necessary for the existence of our planet as biodiversity.”

Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, 2008

- Correlated - when one type is high, so is the other
- Evidence that the relationship might be causal
- Theories of human-environment coevolution
- Assumption that cultural diversity might enhance biodiversity or vice versa
- Preservation of the world's linguistic diversity must be an essential goal

Dialogue at the Institute?

(dialogic politics; Saukko, 2003)

- Deconstruction - reconstruction
- Creating space for dialogue – become critically aware of the discourses that underpin their actions; complex understanding; imagine other ways of being

“Linguistic and cultural diversity are as necessary for the existence of our planet as biodiversity”

- If you accepted this argument, what do you think the institute could do to recognize, protect, and promote linguistic diversity?
- How might this argument support the institute’s sustainability agenda?
- How might it support the institute vision: “integral to the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the province”?

“Deficiency-based models invalidate the linguistic and cultural capital of minorities – making them seem handicaps or deficiencies, instead of valued and validated resources or they render them invisible.”

- If we think of all languages as a form of capital, how might we recognize the linguistic capital that BCIT students bring to the classroom?
- How might we recognize the linguistic capital of our staff?
- How might recognition help convert this capital into material resources?

“English and other dominant languages tend to be projected as the languages of modernity, science and technology, success, national “unity”, democracy, and other such positive features”

- In what ways do language practices at the institute reinforce this idea? In what ways do they challenge this idea?

“The relationship between the dominant and the dominated is rationalized so that what the dominant group does is always presented as beneficial and “helping” those with “less”.”

- What words do we use to describe our language practices with BCIT students?

“Linguistic human rights (LHR) might be a necessary tool – a basic necessity for survival and a dignified life.”

- How might you word the linguistic human rights of institute students?
- What do you think a student’s individual educational LHR’s should be?

“Education systems reflect monolingual reductionism – monolingualism is seen as normal, inevitable, desirable, and sufficient”

- What are some examples of monolingual practices at the institute? How might we behave differently?